

Copyright

by

Amy Katherine Stoller

2014

**The Thesis Committee for Amy Katherine Stoller
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:**

**True Citizens of Bahrain: Discourse on Bahraini Identity since the
Arab Spring**

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Supervisor:

Kamran Aghaie

Karin Wilkins

**True Citizens of Bahrain: Discourse on Bahraini Identity since the
Arab Spring**

by

Amy Katherine Stoller, B.A.

Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2014

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Kamran Aghaie and Dr. Karin Wilkins for their help and thoughtful comments. Without their encouragement, this thesis would not have happened. I would also like to thank the staff of the US Embassy in Manama, Bahrain for making my internship there such a valuable experience. Finally, I appreciate all of my family, friends, and colleagues who patiently listened to endless discussion of this project.

Abstract

True Citizens of Bahrain: Discourse on Bahraini Identity since the Arab Spring

Amy Katherine Stoller, MA

The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

Supervisor: Kamran Aghaie

When Bahrain's uprising began in February 2011, the opposition presented united front. By the time of the national dialogue a year later, however, it had fractured both along and within sectarian lines. The government's inconsistent response to the uprising also demonstrated tensions within Bahrain's royal family. An analysis of discourse on the national dialogue, terrorism and violence, expatriates, and the Gulf Union plan revealed that Bahrain's political factions were divided by their conceptions of Bahraini identity and citizenship. Bahrain was a young nation and questions of identity were still very much under debate. This work drew on newspaper opinion pieces, official statements published by political groups, and posters and videos they posted on social media to explain the questions of identity that developed around these political debates. I also examined how

these debates continued to divide Sunni and Shi'i groups within the opposition as well as the moderate and conservative factions within the royal family. Finally, I considered how these groups used their varying conceptions of Bahraini citizenship to justify their tactics in pursuing or attempting to quash the uprising. Even as each group demanded rights for citizens, they disagreed on what citizenship meant. Similarly, denying that their opponents were "true citizens," allowed each group to delegitimize views they disagreed with.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
Introduction	1
Shi'i groups.....	5
Sunni Groups	9
The Royal Family	11
Chapter 1: The National Dialogue.....	18
The Official Government Position on the Dialogue	20
The Press and Perspectives in Bahrain	21
The Pro-Government Press and the Allegiance of the Shi'i Opposition	23
Bahrain's Loyal Citizens	28
The National Gathering of Unity and the Sunni Perspective.....	31
Al-Wifaq and the Dialogue.....	32
Al-Wasat and Pro-Opposition Skeptics	35
Representation, Loyalty, and Citizenship	38
Chapter 2: Terrorists, Freedom Fighters, and the Terrorist State	44
Terrorism Discourse and Critical Terrorism Studies	45
The Appearance of the February 14 Youth Coalition.....	46
The Riffa Bombing, the Government's Reaction and the Sunni Opposition	48
The Pearl Charter and Sacred Defense	53
Saraya al-Ashtar and Bahrain Fist	59

Al-Wifaq, February 14, and Violence	63
State Terrorism	66
Pro-Government Vigilantism.....	67
Terrorism, Self-Defense, and Law and Order.....	69
Chapter 3: Expatriates and Citizens	72
Expatriates and the Economy in Bahrain.....	73
Expatriates and the Shi'i Opposition	80
Expatriates as a Cultural Threat.....	84
Al-Wifaq's Response to Criticism.....	86
Expatriates in Politics	88
Chapter 4. Gulf Arab Identity or Bahraini Identity	93
Gulf Arab Identity, Neo-Traditionalism, and Nationalism.....	97
The Opposition, Bahraini Nationalism, and Gulf Union	104
Gulf Union and Sovereignty	108
Conclusion.....	112
Bibliography	117

List of Tables

Table 1: A table of Bahrain's major political groups	4
--	---

List of Figures

Figure. 1 The Al Khalifa Family Tree	10
Figure. 2 The Al Khalifa Family Tree detail showing the <i>Khawalid</i>	10

Introduction

When protests in Bahrain began on February 14, 2011, the demonstrators represented a cross-section of Bahraini society, including both Sunnis and Shi'is. A common slogan on signs and banners at the time was "No Shiites, no Sunnis, only Bahrainis."¹ Parliamentarians protested at the Pearl Roundabout alongside unemployed rural youth. The scene resembled those in Cairo, Benghazi, and Tunis in the early days of other "Arab Spring" uprisings. This unity did not last. The massive popular uprising was scattered by a government crackdown, which Matthiesen and others believe targeted Sunni protesters- particularly those with "No Shiites, no Sunnis, only Bahrainis" banners- as a way of detaching them from their Shi'i compatriots.² More fundamentally, many Sunnis were disturbed by what they saw as the increasingly Islamist rhetoric of the Shi'i protesters.³

By February 2013 when members of the officially sanctioned opposition groups were invited to a "national dialogue" to discuss their grievances with each other and government representatives, the divisions within the opposition were obvious. What caused this division? Most of the existing literature attributed this splintering of the Bahraini

¹ Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "Bahrain's Uprising: Regional Dimensions and International Consequences.," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2, no. 1 (May 29, 2013), accessed November 23, 2013, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.be>.

² Toby Matthiesen, *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring That Wasn't* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2013), 58-59.

³ Geneive Abdo, *The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi'a-Sunni Divide*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2013.

opposition to the government's use of sectarianism to drive a wedge between factions of the reform movement. In this view, the government sought to limit the uprising to a Shi'i-only movement that could be more easily discredited as an Iranian plot. Marc Lynch and Toby Matthiesen have also cited "sectarian entrepreneurs" within the various political factions, who played on sectarian sentiment to gain power for themselves.⁴ Careful manipulation of sectarian distrust and resentment helped to explain the growing hostility between Sunnis and Shi'is in Bahrain, and it remains the primary frame both outside observers and Bahrainis use to explain the conflict. It does not, however, explain the divisions within Shi'i and Sunni groups or within the royal family. These divisions have made it impossible to resolve the conflict in Bahrain as neither religious group can present a united front. The goal of this paper is to discover the issues that divide these groups and examine how their differing viewpoints have manifested themselves in the discourse on the uprising

This paper analyzes discourse from opinion pieces published between January 2012 and December 2013 in Bahrain's five newspapers and two the opposition news websites. It also examines statements published by Bahrain's political groups on their website and Facebook pages as well as protest posters and videos published by the February 14 Youth

⁴ Marc Lynch, "The Entrepreneurs of Cynical Sectarianism: Why the Middle East's Identity Conflicts Go Way beyond the Sunni-Shiite Divide," *Foreign Policy*, November 13, 2013, accessed March 21, 2014, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/11/12/the_entrepreneurs_of_cynical_sectarianism

Coalition on their Facebook page. These sources put forward the views of Bahrain's political groups on issues relating to the causes and results of the uprising

In 2011, Bahrainis protested, demanding greater rights for citizens. However, the conflict and political negotiations that followed revealed that these political groups have different conceptions of what defines a Bahraini citizen. The Bahraini state was young, and while all of the groups I have studied would have said they were Bahraini nationalists, they would not have agreed on what that meant. The discourse on this issue of Bahraini identity has coalesced around four different issues: national dialogue, terrorism, expatriates, and the GCC union. The different ways that groups within the royal family, the Shi'i opposition, and Sunni groups conceived of these issues divided them.

Table 1: A table of Bahrain's major political groups

Al-Wifaq's Coalition (officially registered with the government)	al-Wifaq	Shi'i islamist political society
	National Democratic Gathering Society (al-Qawmi)	Shi'i islamist political society
	Unitary National Democratic Assemblage (Wahdawy)	Shi'i islamist political society
	National Democratic Action Society (Waad)	Secular political society
	Ekhaa National Society (Ekhaa)	Shi'i Islamist political society
Unofficial Opposition	al-Haqq	Banned Shi'i islamist political society
	al-'Amal	Banned Shi'i islamist political society
	February 14 Youth Coalition	Shi'i youth activist group
	Saraya al-Ashtar, Bahrain Fist etc.	Shi'i militant groups
Sunni Groups	The National Gathering of Unity	Sunni activist group
	al-Fatih Youth Coalition	Sunni youth activist group
	al-Minbar	Muslim Brotherhood affiliated political society
	al-Asala	Salafi political society

SHI'I GROUPS

Al-Wifaq, a Shi'i Islamist political society, was the most prominent opposition group before and after the uprising began.⁵ Al-Wifaq had been active in Bahraini politics since the 1980s, and it was the largest opposition presence in Parliament before its parliamentarians resigned to protest the government crackdown on protesters.⁶ Throughout the uprising, al-Wifaq led an opposition coalition including both Islamist and secular groups. Beginning in February 2011, it recast itself as the representative of all pro-democracy protestors. Although it was an Islamist party, al-Wifaq very rarely used religious rhetoric or language in its statements. Instead, it called for greater rights for Bahrain's citizens based on nationalist and democratic principles. However, it was also deeply critical of the government's decision to grant citizenship to some expatriates, and effort it views as an attempt to subsume Bahrain's Shi'i majority in a larger Sunni population. The international media commonly referred to this coalition as "the opposition" or the "Shi'i opposition." It generally referred to itself as the "Democratic opposition." Since all of these terms are problematic, I refer to it as "al-Wifaq's coalition."

Not all opposition groups participated in this coalition. al-Haqq (truth) and the Islamic Action Society, commonly known as al-'Amal, developed in the 1990s when they splintered from al-Wifaq because they believed that it was wrong to cooperate with the

⁵ Bahrain's Constitution bans political parties, so organized political groups were known as "political societies."

⁶ Habib Toumi, "Lower chamber accepts resignation of 11 al-Wifaq MPs," Gulf Daily News (Dubai, UAE), March 29, 2011, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/lower-chamber-accepts-resignation-of-11-al-Al-Wifaq-mps-1.784522>.

“illegitimate Khalifa regime” by participating in parliamentary elections.⁷ Because of this attitude, they never held seats in Parliament. The divisions between al-Wifaq and its allies and the “uncooperative” political societies deepened after the institution of a new constitution in 2003.⁸ The constitution was the result of the National Action Charter, a referendum passed by 98 percent of Bahrain’s population. It proposed political and electoral reforms including the delegation of many royal powers to Parliament, and the election, rather than appointment, of the Shura Council.⁹ When it was finished, however, the constitution was a reversal of the government’s stated reformist position and the National Action Charter. It gave more power than ever to the King and other members of the Royal family, and imposing new restraints on political participation and the press.¹⁰

Many of Bahrain’s Shi’is regarded the National Action Charter referendum as the high point of Bahrain’s post-independence history.¹¹ For this reason, they mostly considered the 2003 Constitution, which was imposed by royal command, as a deep

⁷ Laurence Louër, *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 256-6

⁸ Justin Gengler, "Ethnic Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2011), 60-1

⁹ The Shura Council was the upper house of Bahrain's bicameral legislature. All of its members were appointed by the King.

¹⁰ for an in-depth discussion of the 2003 constitution see S. M. Wright, 2008, “Fixing the Kingdom: Political Evolution and Socio-Economic Challenges in Bahrain” (Doha: Center for International and Regional Studies)

¹¹ See, for example: 'Isa Sayar, "A Citizen’s Letter to His Representative in the Dialogue," editorial, *al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 12, 2013, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3811/news/read/738498/1.html> and the Bahraini Opposition. "Manama Document." News release. October 12, 2011. Accessed October 5, 2013. <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2011/10/12/5934/>.

betrayal. In the wake of this reversal, many members of al-Wifaq became disillusioned with Bahrain's political process and joined al-Haqq or al-ʿAmal.¹²

In the first weeks of the uprising, it seemed that the influence of these two parties would continue to increase. al-Haqq's leader Hassan Mushai'ma returned from exile in London on February 20, 2011 and was greeted with a hero's welcome.¹³ However, the majority of the leadership of al-Haqq and al-ʿAmal was arrested late in March and early April 2011, and al-ʿAmal was banned.¹⁴ al-Haqq had operated underground since it failed to register as an official political society in 2005.¹⁵ Although both continued to operate to a certain extent underground, by 2013 they were no longer a political force.¹⁶ Some of their members apparently joined al-Wifaq or the other mainstream opposition societies, while others began to identify themselves as members of the February 14 Youth Coalition.¹⁷

The February 14 Youth Coalition was a nebulous and anonymous group that developed as a result of the large-scale government crackdown on protests in late March

¹² Laurence Louër, *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 287-9

¹³ Thomas Fuller, "Bahrain opposition leader returns from exile," *New York Times* (NY), February 26, 2011, accessed November 23, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/27/world/middleeast/27bahrain.html?_r=0.

¹⁴ Andrew Hammond, "Bahrain says group follows violent Shiite cleric," *Reuters*, June 4, 2012, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/04/us-bahrain-party-cleric-idUSBRE8530QC20120604>.

¹⁵ Justin Gengler, "Ethnic Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2011), 106.

¹⁶ Al-ʿAmal's website and social media accounts are all inactive at the time of writing.

¹⁷ Groups as such as Bahrain Fist claimed to be endorsed by al-Haqq and al-ʿAmal

and early April 2011.¹⁸ It was not an officially recognized political society. In fact, its chief manifestation was an active and popular Facebook page that the unknown organizers used to disseminate protest posters and to post photos and videos of protest marches and confrontations with police. This page became active in April 2011 and as of January 2014 had over 64,000 “likes,” a marked demonstration of popularity in the country with little more than 700,000 citizens.¹⁹ The page also spawned dozens of spin-off and fan accounts.²⁰

Nevertheless, the nature of February 14’s offline organization -if any- remained unclear. The groups of Shi’is, primarily young men from rural villages, who routinely protested and clashed with the police on the weekends were considered by most observers to be “members of February 14” but this may have been more of a self-appointed role than a sign of membership in any type of an organized group.²¹ Anyone who printed out a February 14 poster and carried it in a protest may have considered themselves to be a February 14 member. By this definition, the February 14 Youth Coalition was the largest and most active political group in Bahrain, but it is not surprising that it was not invited to participate in the national dialogue. Nevertheless, any plan for Bahrain’s future would have to account for them.

¹⁸ Toby Mathiesson reported hearing discussion of the February 14 movement at the Pearl roundabout as early as February 19, 2011, but there was no online documentation of this.

¹⁹ Facebook. Accessed November 23, 2013. <https://www.facebook.com/Coalition14th>.

²⁰ Facebook, accessed November 23, 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/search/178269738890732/likers/pages-liked>.

²¹ Toby C. Jones and Ala'a Shehabi, "Bahrain's Revolutionaries," *Foreign Policy*, January 2, 2012, accessed November 23, 2013, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/01/02/bahrains_revolutionaries.

SUNNI GROUPS

Another group that came to prominence in the midst of the March 2011 crackdown was the Sunni opposition. Originally mobilizing to support the government in the face of the “Shi’i rebellion,” this group quickly became critical of the government’s “lenient” treatment of the Shi’is. Gradually, this criticism expanded to encompass the government’s, and in particular the royal family’s, lack of support for the Sunni population. The National Gathering of Unity (TNGOU) was the largest and most influential of these Sunni groups.²² TNGOU was initially excluded from the national dialogue, but it organized protests demanding to be included, and was eventually granted several seats. A few youth organizations favoring more direct and violent confrontation with the Shi’i opposition splintered off from TNGOU, although their size and influence was unclear. Regardless of their actual power, the existence of these groups contributed significantly to the tension in Bahrain.²³

²² Justin Gengler, "Bahrain's Sunni Awakening," *Middle East Report*, January 17, 2012, accessed October 15, 2013, <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero011712>.

²³ Justin Gengler, "Bahrain's Sunni Awakening," *Middle East Report*, January 17, 2012, accessed October 15, 2013, <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero011712>.

Figure. 1 The Al Khalifa Family Tree.²⁴

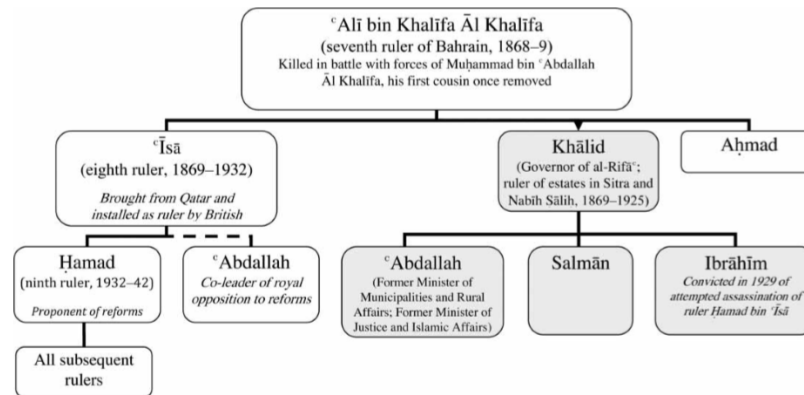
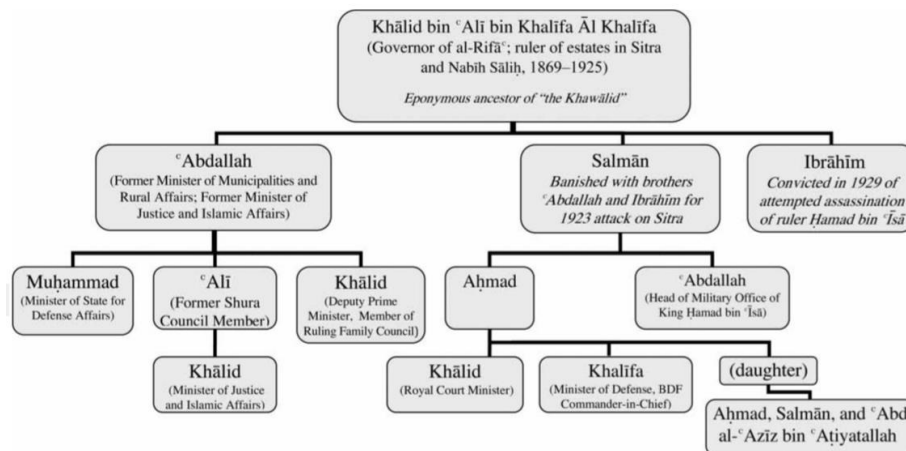


Figure. 2 The Al Khalifa Family Tree detail showing the *Khawalid*.²⁵



²⁴ Justin Gengler, "Royal Factionalism, the Khawalid, and the Securitization of 'the Shī'a Problem' in Bahrain," *Journal of Arabian Studies: Arabia, the Gulf, and the Red Sea* 3, no. 1 (June 27, 2013): 59, accessed October 15, 2013, doi:10.1080/21534764.2013.802944.

²⁵ Justin Gengler, "Royal Factionalism, the Khawalid, and the Securitization of 'the Shī'a Problem' in Bahrain," *Journal of Arabian Studies: Arabia, the Gulf, and the Red Sea* 3, no. 1 (June 27, 2013): 61, accessed October 15, 2013, doi:10.1080/21534764.2013.802944.

THE ROYAL FAMILY

Although Bahrain's royal family are Sunni Muslims, they and their close tribal allies are held somewhat aloof from Bahrain's other Sunni citizens. When the Al Khalifa conquered Bahrain in 1801, they brought with them other members of their tribal confederation.²⁶ In the next two centuries, these tribal allies were granted agricultural estates and other favors and privileges.²⁷ However, when Bahrain began modernizing after the discovery of oil, the king increasingly consolidated power within his immediate family and inner circle, and the other tribal groups were shut out. Bahrain's other Sunnis were non-tribal immigrants from Saudi Arabia's Eastern province, immigrants from Iran, merchants from the other Gulf cities attracted by the pearl trade and other business opportunities in the thriving port city of Manama. These immigrants were dependent on the Royal family and gained a reputation for being politically quiescent. After independence, some immigrants from India and Pakistan gained citizenship, often in recognition of their work for the military and police.²⁸ The royal family saw itself as distinct from these Sunni groups. While it regarded the Sunni population as more loyal than the Shi'is, it traditionally described itself as an impartial arbiter in the periodic conflicts

²⁶ Fuad I. Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 22-25.

²⁷ Fuad I. Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 44-6.

²⁸ Omar al-Shihabi, "Demography and Bahrain's Unrest," *Sada*, March 16, 2011, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/03/16/demography-and-bahrain-s-unrest/6b7y>

between the Sunnis and Shi'is.²⁹ This attitude seemed to have antagonized some politically active Sunnis, leading them to form the Sunni opposition group TNGOU.

When it announced the new national dialogue, Bahrain's government was also far from united. The deepening divisions within the Royal family were signaled by the government's inconsistent policy towards the opposition. In fact, to discuss "the government" as distinct from "the royal family" is largely meaningless. Members of the Al Khalifa held nearly all the major cabinet positions, and the majority of all cabinet posts.³⁰ Al-Wifaq has repeatedly demanded that a member of the royal family participate in the dialogue, knowing that decisions reached without the Al Khalifas' approval would lack authority.³¹ Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the king's uncle, has been the Prime Minister of Bahrain since it gained its independence in 1971, making him the world's longest ruling Prime Minister. He was also widely regarded as the most powerful man in Bahrain, as well as being one of the country's largest landholders and one of its chief industrial magnates.³² Ahmed Bin Atiyatallah Al Khalifa, the Royal Court Minister, was likewise regarded as a

²⁹ Gengler has argued that the government of Bahrain encouraged competition between the Sunnis and Shiites in order to limit the meaningful opposition. See, for example: Justin Gengler, "Ethnic Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2011),

³⁰ Justin Gengler, "Royal Factionalism, the Khawlid, and the Securitization of 'the Shi'a Problem' in Bahrain," *Journal of Arabian Studies: Arabia, the Gulf, and the Red Sea* 3, no. 1 (June 27, 2013): 53, accessed October 15, 2013, doi:10.1080/21534764.2013.802944.

³¹ Al-Wifaq, "Statement on the National Dialogue," news release, March 6, 2013, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://alAl-Wifaq.net/cms/2013/03/06/7624/>.

³² Justin Gengler, "Royal Factionalism, the Khawlid, and the Securitization of 'the Shi'a Problem' in Bahrain," *Journal of Arabian Studies: Arabia, the Gulf, and the Red Sea* 3, no. 1 (June 27, 2013): 59, accessed October 15, 2013, doi:10.1080/21534764.2013.802944.

power behind the throne. Together, these two lead a faction in the Royal family known as the *Khawalid*. The Bahraini press rarely discusses royal family power struggles, but outside observers characterized this faction as opposed to any kind of political liberalization, and many view them as the real architects of the controversial 2003 constitution. They tend to be hostile to Bahrain's Shi'is, and to view the uprising as primarily a security problem, to be solved by a military intervention.³³ As can be seen in the family tree above, they control many of the "power ministries," such as the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Justice. This faction includes many members of the king's father's generation, but the royal family did not divide strictly along generational lines. For example, King Hamad's fifth son Prince Nasser has been an outspoken conservative and has been openly hostile to the opposition. Prominent opposition prisoners have accused Prince Nasser of personally participating in torture.

On the other side of the equation were the moderates, led by Crown Prince Salman. This group includes royal family members who participated in the Crown Prince's Economic Development Board, a sort of shadow cabinet operated by the Crown Prince between 2008 and 2011 with a focus on economic reform and liberalization.³⁴ The Crown Prince was admired by many members of the opposition for his willingness to meet with

³³ Justin Gengler, "Royal Factionalism, the Khawalid, and the Securitization of 'the Shi'a Problem' in Bahrain," *Journal of Arabian Studies: Arabia, the Gulf, and the Red Sea* 3, no. 1 (June 27, 2013): 53, accessed October 15, 2013, doi:10.1080/21534764.2013.802944.

³⁴ Justin Gengler, "Royal Factionalism, the Khawalid, and the Securitization of 'the Shi'a Problem' in Bahrain," *Journal of Arabian Studies: Arabia, the Gulf, and the Red Sea* 3, no. 1 (June 27, 2013): 62, accessed October 15, 2013, doi:10.1080/21534764.2013.802944.

them at the beginning of the uprising, although that effort ultimately failed.³⁵ Outside observers also believe that he was the driving force behind the current National Dialogue, and he engaged in various conciliatory efforts including visiting opposition and other Shi'i *majales*, open houses held during Ramadan, at one point being photographed by a newspaper photographer seated next to opposition leader Khalil Marzooq.³⁶

Despite these manifestations of goodwill, it was difficult to determine where exactly the “moderates” stood with regard to the opposition’s demands since the Crown Prince and his supporters rarely speak about it in concrete terms. His lack of a clear plan may have been strategic as he negotiated his own position within the royal family, but it jeopardized his support among the opposition. He was increasingly regarded as ineffective. Nevertheless, he retained many admirers among Western scholars, who saw him as a hope for democracy in Bahrain.³⁷ Another, more cynical view of the moderates, has argued that they pushed for negotiations to distract the opposition and kill time while they waited for

³⁵ Justin Gengler, "Crown Prince Salman Appointed Managing First Deputy Prime Minister for Important and Serious Affairs," Religion and Politics in Bahrain (blog), entry posted March 12, 2013, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2013/03/crown-prince-salman-appointed-managing.html>.

³⁶ Bawaba al-Bahrain, Picture of the Crown Prince at the al-Aali Family Majlis, Sitting near the Terrorist Khalil al-Marzuq, photograph, Bawaba al-Bahrain, July 18, 2013, accessed November 24, 2013, <http://b4bh.com/b/newspaper-view-4999.html>.

³⁷ Justin Gengler, "Crown Prince Salman Appointed Managing First Deputy Prime Minister for Important and Serious Affairs," Religion and Politics in Bahrain (blog), entry posted March 12, 2013, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2013/03/crown-prince-salman-appointed-managing.html>.

the situation to calm down.³⁸ In November 2012, although many, both in the government and the opposition, were skeptical about the dialogue's chance of success, the fact that it happened at all was regarded as a victory for the crown prince's faction.

The king's role in this conflict was hotly debated. At the time of the National Action Charter, he was perceived both by outsiders and by many Bahrainis as a pioneering reformer. This reputation was reversed, however, after the imposition of the 2003 Constitution. Most observers regarded him either as a pragmatist who used the threat of reform as a weapon in the family power struggle, or as a completely powerless figure who is constantly buffeted by the changing power dynamic within his family.³⁹ The February 14 Youth Coalition, on the other hand, regarded him as the ultimate symbol of government oppression, and made him the target of their fiercest antigovernment rhetoric. "Down, down Hamad!" was the ubiquitous message in Bahrain's anti-government graffiti, particularly in Shi'i villages.⁴⁰

Finally, in this case, as with many issues in Bahrain, it is important to consider the role of the international community. Some commentators have suggested that the national

³⁸ See for example: Elizabeth Dickinson, "All Talk," *Foreign Policy*, October 31, 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/10/31/all_talk_bahrain.

³⁹ See, for example: Abbas Busafwan, *The Structure of Tyranny in Bahrain: A Study of the Balance of Power within the Ruling Family* (London: Bahrain Centre for Studies in London, 2012), accessed December 1, 2013, <http://www.bcsl.org.uk/en/publications/bahrain-structure-tyranny-power/1547-bahrain-structure-tyranny-power>.

⁴⁰ Toby Matthiesen, *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring That Wasn't* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2013), 33.

dialogue is primarily a public relations exercise for the benefit of Western governments. Whatever the truth of this, both Bahrain's economy and its national defense were closely linked to the West, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom. Western influence in Bahrain had an impact on how both the government and the opposition framed their actions.

By framing its solution to the conflict in terms of participatory democracy, the government made it possible for Western governments to continue supporting it, doing business with it, and supplying it with weapons, without loss of face internationally. By the same token, the willingness of al-Wifaq's coalition to couch their struggle in terms of "democracy promotion" and "human rights" let them present themselves as suitable recipients of Western support and possible future partners in the event of regime change. Both the government and the entire spectrum of the opposition spent considerable time, money, and effort on their international public relations. According to Bahrain Watch, a UK-based NGO, the Government of Bahrain had spent more than \$2 billion on public relations in the US and the United Kingdom between 2011 and 2012.⁴¹ Opposition figures such as Maryam Al Khawaja and Nabeel Rajab were ubiquitous on social media with tens of thousands of followers, and al-Wifaq published its statements in both Arabic and

⁴¹ "PR Watch: Keeping an Eye on the Kingdom's PR," Bahrain Watch, last modified November 23, 2012, accessed April 27, 2013, <http://bahrainwatch.org/pr/>.

English. It is therefore reasonable to assume that many of the statements coming from both sides were intended for an international audience.

As the ever-increasing number of political groups in Bahrain demonstrated, the country's political divisions are far more complex than a Sunni-Shi'i divide. Each of the groups claimed to speak for "true Bahrainis," and they were divided by this question: who were the true Bahrainis? Their answers are the subject of this paper.

Chapter 1: The National Dialogue

The national dialogue began on February 10, 2013. Its stated aim was to “define mutual visions that will further enhance the reform process towards overall development and progress.”⁴² It was moderated by the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa. Participating were 10 Sunni political societies, al-Wifaq’s coalition, and eight pro-government “independent” parliamentarians. The first few sessions of the dialogue, assembled under the slogan “Bahrain. Our Unity,” provoked a storm of comment in the pro-government and opposition press, and a flurry of statements on political societies’ websites. Essentially, the national dialogue was viewed as an invitation to discuss the nature of Bahraini citizenship.

Each of Bahrain’s political groups saw the dialogue differently depending on their perception of true Bahraini citizenship. By inviting only specific groups to participate in the dialogue, the government signaled which opposition groups they considered true citizens with legitimate concerns. By participating, al-Wifaq’s coalition conceded the legitimacy of the government. The February 14 Youth Coalition and other more militant Shi’i groups sought the fall of the government and regarded the Al Khalifa as illegitimate, so they viewed political negotiation as a distraction from the cause of Shi’i self-defense. Sunni groups saw themselves as the only loyal citizens and participated in the dialogue to

⁴² Government of Bahrain, "About the National Dialogue," news release, accessed November 25, 2013, <http://www.nd.bh/en/index.php/the-dialogue/the-dialogue2011/about>.

ensure that the government did not give too much away to the Shi'is while failing to reward the Sunnis. The conservative faction of the Royal family considered the entire Shi'i opposition as foreign agents, with no right to make demands on the Bahraini government.

This national dialogue was actually the third dialogue planned since the 2011 uprising. The first, which began in June 2011, included 300 participants, five of whom represented the Shi'i opposition.⁴³ Gengler has referred to this effort as the government "fighting dialogue with dialogue," since the huge number of participants made serious discussion virtually impossible, and the dialogue succeeded mainly in temporarily halting protests.⁴⁴ It effectively collapsed on July 17, 2011 when al-Wifaq withdrew from the dialogue, frustrated with the lack of progress. The remaining dialogue participants concluded on July 29 by recommending that the King devolve a small amount of power over ministries to Parliament. Most importantly, they recommended that the Prime Minister be allowed to appoint ministers, rather than ministers being appointed by the King. When these recommendations were implemented, however, they were perceived as a victory more for the Prime Minister than for the opposition.⁴⁵

⁴³ Government of Bahrain, "About the National Dialogue," news release, accessed November 25, 2013, <http://www.nd.bh/en/index.php/the-dialogue/the-dialogue2011/about>.

⁴⁴ Justin Gengler, "Fighting Dialogue with More Dialogue," *Religion and Politics in Bahrain* (blog), entry posted June 17, 2011, accessed December 7, 2013, <http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/search?q=fighting+dialogue+with+dialogue>.

⁴⁵ Bahrain Mirror, "On the Principle of Consenting to the Consensus: Transfer of the King's Powers to the Prime Minister," Bahrain Mirror (Bahrain), July 28, 2011, accessed November 25, 2013.

An attempt at dialogue in March 2005 sponsored by the Royal Court Minister Sheikh Ahmad Bin Atiyatallah Al Khalifa failed after Sunni political groups announced they would boycott. On finding that they had not, in fact, been invited to participate in the dialogue, Sunni groups demonstrated against it.⁴⁶ The idea was quietly dropped soon afterward. Interestingly, rumors circulated on opposition news site at the time claimed that the government was willing to consider the opposition demands outlined “Manama Document”. Due to this history, the announcement of the national dialogue encountered mixed reactions. This chapter looks at discourse on the national dialogue in opinion pieces published in the Bahraini press, with a focus on the first week of the dialogue. These perspectives are supplemented with statements from al-Wifaq and other opposition societies.

THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT POSITION ON THE DIALOGUE

According to official government statements, the 2013 dialogue, like its predecessors, was intended not as a negotiation between the government and the opposition, but as a venue for all sections of society to dialogue with one another. The government merely attended to “facilitate” dialogue.⁴⁷ This position echoes what Gengler described as the Royal family’s traditional role in Bahrain’s sectarian struggles. The

⁴⁶ Justin Gengler, "Look Who's Boycotting Dialogue Now," Religion and Politics in Bahrain (blog), entry posted March 25, 2012, accessed November 25, 2013, <http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2012/03/look-whos-boycotting-dialogue-now.html>.

⁴⁷ "Justice Minister: Resumption of the National Dialogue is an Assertion of the Open-Door Policy," Bahrain National Dialogue, last modified February 4, 2013, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.nd.bh/en/index.php>.

government stood apart and acted as an arbiter between Bahrain Sunni and Shi'i populations.⁴⁸ Although the government considered the Sunnis a loyal constituency, it was not seen as a Sunni group itself, and so it did not participate in sectarian struggles. Despite the royal family's insistence that it was not a participant in the dialogue, the Al Khalifas and their role in Bahrain were among the major topics in media discussion of the dialogue. Many of the questions that surrounded the dialogue dealt with the royal family's place in Bahraini politics

THE PRESS AND PERSPECTIVES IN BAHRAIN

Although opinions and attitudes varied slightly from article to article, the opinions expressed tended to correspond to the royal family affiliation of the particular newspaper in which they were published.

Al-Watan, a paper regarded as close to the conservative faction of the Royal Court, was fiercely critical of the opposition.⁴⁹ They tended to be particularly hostile to the Shi'i opposition, and were concerned about Bahrain's cultural and moral decay.⁵⁰ *Al-Watan* described its goals as "maintaining national and Arab principles and giving full support to the law-and-order system."⁵¹ Its editor-in-chief was Yousif Bin Khalil, known for his

⁴⁸ Justin Gengler, "Ethnic Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2011), 56-59

⁴⁹ Justin Gengler, "Ethnic Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2011),

⁵⁰ Al-Saeed Abaddi, "Interview with Leader of Bahrain's al-Menbar Society," news release, March 4, 2007, accessed November 25, 2013, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=2264>.

⁵¹ "About Us," *Al-Watan*, accessed December 5, 2013, <http://alwatannews.net/default.aspx>

eleven-part article series "Ayatollah Obama and Bahrain," which linked perceived US support for the opposition to a US-Iranian plot. Unsurprisingly, *al-Watan's* columnists were generally not optimistic about the dialogue's prospects, and their criticism of the dialogue was indirect criticism of the moderates who were behind it.

Although obviously a pro-government newspaper, *Akhbar al-Khalij* was more difficult to categorize than *al-Watan*. The Prime Minister owns a significant share of the paper, and its editorials generally follow his anti-opposition, pro-Saudi Arabia views.⁵² However, *Akhbar al-Khalij* was less openly critical of the opposition than *al-Watan*, and it tended to support the government's official line. The Minister of State for Information Affairs, Sameera Rajab was a regular contributor before accepting a government post. Furthermore, *Akhbar al-Khalij's* history as Bahrain's only leftist newspaper occasionally showed in its criticism of the government for social and economic problems. *Al-Ayam* was Bahrain's most widely-read newspaper with 36,000 daily subscribers. Owned by former Information Minister Nabil al-Hamar, its writers included Sunni and Shi'i clerics, academics, and government officials. Members of the royal family occasionally also wrote op-eds for this paper.⁵³

⁵² Justin Gengler, "Ethnic Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2011),

⁵³ Al-Ayam, "About al-Ayam," al-Ayam, last modified 2013, accessed November 25, 2013, <http://www.alayam.com/AboutAlayam>.

At the other end of the spectrum, *al-Wasat* was nominally an independent newspaper, but it generally favored the opposition. In March 2011, *al-Wasat* was shut down and its editor-in-chief Mansour al-Jamri was arrested. It was later reopened with a new, presumably more pliant, editorial staff.⁵⁴ Although al-Jamri was actually reinstated, the newspaper became more cautious in its coverage. For this reason, many of its readers defected to the online outlets the *Bahrain Mirror* and the *Manama Voice*. These two online sources, run primarily by Bahraini journalists living abroad, took an outspokenly pro-opposition stance and were widely read among Bahraini Shi'is. *Bahrain Mirror*, in particular, was very influential, although its reports were unreliable and its sources are almost never named.

These opposition news sources varied in their opinions of the dialogue. Some *al-Wasat* columnists considered it as an important victory for the opposition, while others are suspicious of the government's motives. The *Bahrain Mirror* and the *Manama Voice* reported almost nothing about the national dialogue, focusing instead on ongoing confrontations between police and protesters and on human rights abuses.

THE PRO-GOVERNMENT PRESS AND THE ALLEGIANCE OF THE SHI'I OPPOSITION

Discussion of this question in *Akhbar al-Khalij* and *al-Watan* focused on the issue of foreign interference. The discourse on foreign interference was one of the longest

⁵⁴ Committee to Protect Journalists, "2011 CPJ International Press Freedom Awardee," news release, 2013, accessed November 25, 2013, <http://www.cpj.org/awards/2011/mansoor-al-jamri-bahrain.php>.

running themes in Bahraini politics, and this focus was not surprising in a small island surrounded by more powerful neighbors.⁵⁵ Bahrain's royal family has been concerned about the prospect of Iranian interference for decades, but their unease has been particularly acute since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, when a movement led by Shi'i clerics toppled Iran's monarchy.⁵⁶ These tensions were heightened after a statement by Iranian parliamentarian claiming Bahrain as Iran's "thirteenth province."⁵⁷

In the view of many Bahraini Sunnis, the Shi'i population was an "Iranian fifth column" actively working to destabilize the government. Gengler described this as one of the "myths of Bahrain."⁵⁸ This myth is so ubiquitous in Bahrain's political discourse that the phrase "foreign interference" in a newspaper article can serve as shorthand for the entire argument that the Shi'is were linked to Iran.⁵⁹

More recently, the Bahrain government became concerned with the role of Hezbollah in Bahrain's uprising. The Bahraini media reported that Hezbollah had trained

⁵⁵ Nelida Fuccaro, *Histories of City of State in the Persian Gulf: Manama since 1800* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-2, EPUB.

⁵⁶ Justin Gengler, "Ethnic Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2011), 82-85

⁵⁷ Marc Lynch, "What's Happening in Bahrain (I Mean, the 14th Province of Iran)?" *Foreign Policy*, February 19, 2009, accessed November 29, 2013, http://lynch.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/02/19/whats_happening_in_bahrain_i_mean_the_14th_province_of_iran.

⁵⁸ Justin Gengler, "Ethnic Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2011), 81

⁵⁹ See, for example: Fawzia Rashid, "Twisted Logic: Begging for Foreign Intervention and Talking about Saudi Intervention," editorial, *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain), accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12743/article/7053.html>.

members of February 14 youth in the use of weapons and explosives.⁶⁰ Newspapers also repeatedly published photos of seized weapons caches in rooms adorned with Hezbollah and Iranian flags and posters of Ayatollah Khomeini. Concerns about Hezbollah rose further due to Hezbollah's blatant role in Syria's Civil War. Security-minded members of Bahrain's government describe Hezbollah's involvement in Syria was part of a region-wide Iranian plot.⁶¹

Al-Watan is the most explicit in linking al-Wifaq and Iran. In fact, *al-Watan* has routinely referred to the political society as "Iran-linked al-Wifaq" without feeling the need to justify the description. The link between Iran and al-Wifaq was a truism among their audience. The Iranian media's vocal support for Bahrain's Shi'is was seen as further evidence of this connection. *Al-Watan* articles also have tended to generalize about the opposition, lumping them all together under the label of al-Wifaq.

One *al-Watan* article titled "Away from the Dialogue and into the Lion's Den" insisted "there is no true revolution in Bahrain," saying that the entire uprising was an Iranian plot.⁶² The author argued that al-Wifaq had been misleading honest Bahraini citizens, and is now cynically working to derail the dialogue. He went on to imply that all

⁶⁰ Al-Akhbar, "Bahrain Says Iran, Hezbollah Behind 'Terror Cell,'" *Al-Akhbar English* (Beirut, Lebanon), February 20, 2013, accessed November 29, 2013, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/15024>.

⁶¹ Abdullah Khalifa, "Iranian Fascism and Its Results," editorial, *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain), February 19, 2013, accessed March 11, 2013, <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12751/article/8693.html>.

⁶² Yusuf al-Batakhilil, "Away from the Dialogue and into the Lion's Den," editorial, *Al-Watan* (Manama, Bahrain), February 10, 2013, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.alwatannews.net>.

attempts at dialogue would be fruitless because the members of al-Wifaq were not true citizens of Bahrain, and so they are not interested in a real resolution of conflict.

In a similar vein, the article “Strikes and the Return of Teams” asserted that al-Wifaq is behind the bombings and other street violence, and questions the government’s willingness to “negotiate with terrorists.”⁶³ Another article published a few days after the beginning of the dialogue contended that it was already beginning to fail because of a lack of trust.⁶⁴ It attributed this lack of trust to the opposition’s “encouragement of radicalism” and to the spread of “terrorism,” probably a reference to the rise of the February 14 Youth Coalition.⁶⁵ The author argued that if the dialogue was to succeed, religious authorities needed to encourage stability and national unity. This last statement was a reference to Sheikh ‘Isa al-Qasim, al-Wifaq’s spiritual leader. Al-Qasim did not have an official post in al-Wifaq, but he was Bahrain’s most respected Shi’i cleric, and he served in Parliament in the “religious bloc” that was a precursor to al-Wifaq.⁶⁶ Bahraini Sunnis were particularly

⁶³Hisham al-Zaidi, "Strikes and the Return of Teams," editorial, *Al-Watan* (Bahrain), February 12, 2013, accessed November 29, 2013, <http://www.alwatannews.net>

⁶⁴ Yusuf al-Batakhilil, "Guarantees for the National Dialogue...Where is the Trust?" editorial, *Al-Watan* (Manama, Bahrain), February 11, 2013, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.alwatannews.net>.

⁶⁵ Yusuf al-Batakhilil, "Guarantees for the National Dialogue...Where is the Trust?" editorial, *Al-Watan* (Manama, Bahrain), February 11, 2013, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.alwatannews.net>.

⁶⁶ Laurence Louër, *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.107-108

suspicious of Qasim because he studied Shi'i theology in Iran's holy city of Qom before returning to Bahrain to hold the seat in Parliament.⁶⁷

Al-Watan articles were also concerned with al-Wifaq's relationship with foreign powers other than Iran. In 2012, the newspaper ran an 11-part series, written by the paper's editor-in-chief, on President Obama's secret relationship to al-Wifaq and through al-Wifaq to Iran.⁶⁸ All of these arguments about al-Wifaq's links to foreign countries eventually lead back to Iran. In an article criticizing the fact that the leadership of al-Wifaq made a trip to Russia, the author noted Russia's long-standing links to Bashar al-Assad and connected this to Assad's alliance with Iran.⁶⁹ These accusations became so well known that a picture of President Obama photoshopped with a turban can stand for the entire argument.⁷⁰ This argument portrayed al-Wifaq, and through al-Wifaq the entire opposition, as merely an agent of colonial powers, and it was a direct retort to al-Wifaq's portrayal of itself as a representative of "true Bahraini citizens."

⁶⁷ Laurence Louër, *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).108

⁶⁸ Justin Gengler, "Obama- Iran: A Love Story, Chapter 2," Religion and Politics in Bahrain (blog), entry posted July 8, 2011, accessed November 29, 2013, <http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2011/07/obama-iran-love-story-chapter-2.html>.

⁶⁹ Intisar al-Bina', "Al-Wifaq and Recent Failure of the Russian Well," editorial, *Al-Watan* (Bahrain), <http://www.alwatannews.net>.

⁷⁰ Obama Used to Wear Arab Dress...Now He Wears Iranian Dress," cartoon, *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Bahrain), accessed November 29, 2013, <http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2013/10/fallout-with-saudi-arabia-affords-us.html>.

The skepticism of all the *al-Watan* columnists about the dialogue and the accusations about al-Wifaq and the opposition were also indirect attacks on the moderate faction of the royal family. Those within the royal family who believed that a political solution was possible invested much of their credibility in the National Dialogue project. By suggesting that al-Wifaq and others were manipulating the dialogue even as they committed terrorist acts in the streets, they implied that the dialogue was a naïve and doomed project and that those within the Royal family who promoted it were fools. More fundamentally, these articles argued that any opposition to the government equated to terrorism, and that the government should not negotiate with terrorists. Thus, it dismissed the idea that there was any legitimate and sincere opposition in Bahrain, and advocated a security solution to the problem.

BAHRAIN'S LOYAL CITIZENS

In general, *Akhbar al-Khalij* articles were more optimistic about the prospects of the dialogue, in keeping with their support for the official government position that the dialogue is worthwhile. Most of these columnists appeared willing to give it the benefit of the doubt. The first article published on the first day of the dialogue, entitled "The Dialogue of Truth," described the dialogue as a gift from the gracious Royal family and said that "the whole spectrum of opinion would be represented."⁷¹ This article differed from *al-Watan* articles in that it assumed that legitimate opposition to the government may exist.

⁷¹ Hala Kamel al-Deen, "The Dialogue of Truth," editorial, *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain), February 10, 2013, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.akhbar-alkhalij.com/12742/article/7038.html>.

However, it went on to emphasize the importance of “renouncing fanaticism,” if the dialogue was to succeed. Although it did not explain the meaning of “fanaticism,” or who exactly was expected to renounce it, given the context, it is reasonable to assume that it refers to al-Wifaq and possibly to the February 14 movement.⁷² This means that the article assumed the existence of a “reasonable opposition” who was not represented by these groups, and who would be willing to negotiate with the government in good faith.

Another article was a direct response to a sermon by al-Qasim about the national dialogue. He refuted al-Qasim’s accusations that the royal family act as “dictators” in Bahrain, saying the governance in Bahrain was a partnership between the royal family and “loyal citizens” and also challenged al-Wifaq’s claim to be working for democracy, saying that the political society itself was not democratic, but authoritarian.⁷³ It also mentioned the threat posed by an “adolescent movement,” a more clear reference to February 14. This article is unusual for *Akhbar al-Khalij* in that it made direct accusations against specific groups. In general, editorials in this paper refer vaguely to “dissident groups” or “foreign agents” implying that at least some part of al-Wifaq’s coalition were actual citizens with legitimate grievances.

⁷² Hala Kamel al-Deen, "The Dialogue of Truth," editorial, *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain), February 10, 2013, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.akhbar-alkhalij.com/12742/article/7038.html>.

⁷³ Mohammed al-Mahamid, "Al-Qasim and the Bab al-Khruj Sermon," editorial, *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain), February 10, 2013, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.akhbar-alkhalij.com/12742/article/7042.html>.

Of all Bahraini newspapers, *al-Ayam* was the best representation of moderate royal faction, and the opinion pieces published in the *al-Ayam* newspaper during this first week of the dialogue, spoke directly to the opposition's argument about trying to bring democracy to Bahrain. Several of these articles invoke the national action charter and the 2003 constitutionalize evidence of the government's efforts at reform. One article asserted that Bahrain was already a democracy.⁷⁴ Another article argued that all citizens have the same goals and that political society should overcome sectarianism for the sake of the national interest.⁷⁵

The argument that the Shi'i opposition were not true citizens of Bahrain had been implied by the Prime Minister throughout the uprising, and directly stated by the head of the Bahrain Defense force, Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa Bin Ali Al Khalifa.⁷⁶ However, if the government insisted that the opposition consisted entirely of foreign agents, whether agents of Iran or agents of the US Embassy, that made the entire project the National Dialogue ridiculous. It would clearly be inappropriate for the government to negotiate with "foreign terrorist agents," in order to justify the existence of the national dialogue, in the government must concede the existence of a "good-faith opposition" with whom it could

⁷⁴ Salah Jouder, "The Charter is the Foundation," editorial. *Al-Ayam* (Bahrain), February 14, 2013, accessed November 29, 2013, <http://www.alayam.com/writers/7030>.

⁷⁵ Taji 'Aoud, "Bahrain's National Dialogue ...Ask the Old Hand," editorial. *Al-Ayam* (Bahrain), February 13, 2013, accessed November 29, 2013,

⁷⁶ Safety and security in Bahrain are restored: says BDF Commander - In - Chief Marshal Shaikh Khalifa," *Bahrain News Agency*, May 2, 2011, accessed April 24, 2013, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/454979>.

negotiate. This explained the assumption of many articles that there was some sort of legitimate opposition led astray by the extremist elements. However, the assertion of several of the *al-Watan* editorials that the entire opposition was acting in bad faith toward the government makes the government look either naïve – because it attempted to negotiate with obvious terrorists – disingenuous – because it put on a show of negotiation with terrorists – or weak – since it was forced to negotiate with terrorists because it was unable to stop them.

THE NATIONAL GATHERING OF UNITY AND THE SUNNI PERSPECTIVE

The Sunni opposition called for many of the same reforms as al-Wifaq's coalition, but in practice they primarily sought to prevent al-Wifaq's coalition from gaining an advantage over the Sunni citizens. They were concerned that the government was not protecting the interests of their most loyal citizens.

At a rally in June 2011, Dr. Abdul Latif al-Mahmood, head of the Sunni opposition coalition The National Gathering of Unity (TNGOU) explicitly claimed that the government was weak. Speaking about alleged US intervention in Bahrain, he said: "If the regime is too weak to stand up to the U.S., they need to declare that so people can have their say."⁷⁷ When the 2013 National Dialogue was announced, TNGOU organized demonstrations to demand that it be granted seats at the dialogue table. As it explained in

⁷⁷ Justin Gengler, "Are Bahrain's Sunnis Still Awake?" *Sada*, June 25, 2012, accessed October 3, 2013, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/06/25/are-bahrain-s-sunnis-still-awake/caoa>.

the “The Story of the National Gathering of Unity” section on its website, TNGOU “seeks to bring balance to the national dialogue.”⁷⁸ TNGOU’s role as a balancing force was echoed by a cartoon published in the *Akhbar al-Khalij* newspaper shortly after the group was first formed. The cartoon depicted the kingdom as a small traditional fishing boat, pushed almost to the point of capsizing by a giant wave. In the next panel, the boat was steadied and held upright by a wave from the opposite direction labeled “The National Gathering of Unity.” The third panel showed the boat sailing tranquilly on a calm sea.⁷⁹ The Prime Minister echoed this characterization of the loyalist opposition, describing it as “standing united as a bulwark defending their country against subversive conspiracies.”⁸⁰

AL-WIFAQ AND THE DIALOGUE

Much of al-Wifaq’s discourse between the announcement of the dialogue and the first session was focused on denying government accusations that it was a foreign-backed terrorist organization. It repeatedly and vehemently denied any involvement with Iran and Hezbollah.⁸¹ In its statements on the dialogue, it argued that the dialogue was the result of

⁷⁸ “The Story of the National Gathering of Unity,” Altajama3, accessed October 15, 2013, <http://altajam3.org/portal/arabic>

⁷⁹ Muharraqi, “Untitled,” cartoon, *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Bahrain), June 22, 2011, accessed December 5, 2013, <http://www.akhbar-alkhalij.com/cartoon.php?img=source/12143/images/mcartoon.jpg>.

⁸⁰ Justin Gengler, “Are Bahrain’s Sunnis Still Awake?” Sada, June 25, 2012, accessed October 3, 2013, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/06/25/are-bahrain-s-sunnis-still-awake/caoa>.

⁸¹ See for example: Al-Wifaq, “Findings of BICI Confirm the Nationalistic Nature of Bahraini Revolution,” news release, November 24, 2011, accessed December 1, 2013, <http://alAl-Wifaq.net/cms/2011/11/24/6026/>. And al-Wifaq, “Al-Wifaq SG: Our Priority is National Solution, Gov is Pushing the Country to a Regional Battlefield,” news release, November 29, 2013, accessed December 1, 2013, <http://alAl-Wifaq.net/cms/2013/11/29/24570/>.

its own peaceful demands for greater democracy in Bahrain.⁸² It implied that a political solution was possible, as long as the government operates in good faith. It also implied that al-Wifaq believed that some within the government are capable of negotiating in good faith with the opposition. Naturally, as a dialogue participant, al-Wifaq had a vested interest in the success of the dialogue, so it was consistent for them to put a positive spin on the dialogue and its public statements.

In one of its first official statements on the dialogue, al-Wifaq outlined its goals for the dialogue. These were virtually identical to the demands it had been making since the beginning of the uprising:

The founding of an elected executive authority which expresses the popular will , Defining the authorities of the legislative authority Fair electoral system, independence of the judicial authority, The integration of all in the security services, Political naturalization, discrimination, corruption, transitional justice, implementing the recommendations of both the (BICI) and the UN Human Rights Council, including the release of all prisoners of conscience, allowing fundamental freedoms and rationalizing government and quasi-government media.⁸³

Al-Wifaq also took issue with the justice minister's statement that "the dialogue cannot be serious if the National Democratic Opposition Parties are to demand authorities from the partakers, who do not have these authorities in the first place."⁸⁴ An al-Wifaq

⁸² Al-Wifaq, "Statement on the National Dialogue," news release, March 6, 2013, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://Al-Wefaq.net/cms/2013/03/06/7624/>.

⁸³ Al-Wifaq, "Statement on the National Dialogue," news release, March 6, 2013, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://alWefaq.net/cms/2013/03/06/7624/>.

⁸⁴ "Justice Minister: Resumption of the National Dialogue is an Assertion of the Open-Door Policy," Bahrain National Dialogue, last modified February 4, 2013, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.nd.bh/en/index.php>.

statement retorted “the people are the source of all powers.” The statement also alleged that the dialogue so far “lacks seriousness,” because those with real decision-making power are not participating.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, al-Wifaq confirmed its commitment to the dialogue as a “strategic choice, and its commitment to finding permanent solutions to “Bahrain’s political crisis.”⁸⁶

Later statements expressed the political societies’ growing frustration with the lack of progress in the dialogue. Their primary issues were the “unfair representation” in the dialogue, in particular the presence of “independents”⁸⁷ There were eight “independents” participating in the dialogue, as opposed to six representatives from the Democratic opposition political societies. Al-Wifaq alleged that all of these “independents” were pro-government. In this view, the eight independents, plus the 10 representatives of the Sunni opposition societies meant that pro-government supporters outnumbered opposition members three to one. The situation particularly incensed the opposition because it mirrored what they viewed as the greatest injustice in Bahrain: the underrepresentation of Bahrain’s Shi’i majority in national politics.

Frustration growing, al-Wifaq withdrew from the dialogue three times between February and December. In the statement announcing al-Wifaq’s first withdrawal, Ali

⁸⁵ Al-Wifaq, "Statement on the National Dialogue," news release, March 6, 2013, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://Al-Wifaq.net/cms/2013/03/06/7624/>.

⁸⁶ Al-Wifaq, "Statement on the National Dialogue," news release, March 6, 2013, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://Al-Wifaq.net/cms/2013/03/06/7624/>.

⁸⁷ Al-Wifaq, "Al-Wefaq: Official Measures Reflect Flounder and Absence of Nationalism," news release, March 27, 2013, accessed April 29, 2013, <http://alAl-Wifaq.net/index.php?show=news&action=article&id=7740>.

Salman cited the ongoing government crackdown as the reason for the withdrawal. He also called on the government to stop “the sectarian media rhetoric” and to allow the opposition equal access to the media.⁸⁸ Subsequent statements expressed frustration over the lack of progress in the dialogue and the government’s unwillingness to address issues of representation. Even after these objections, al-Wifaq, and its allies who occasionally withdrew as well in solidarity, always returned to the negotiating table.

Al-Wifaq had to remain committed to the dialogue because it is a political party and had been designed to work within a political system. Its goal for these negotiations was to empower parliament. For these reasons, while al-Wifaq criticized the government it never directly questioned the legitimacy of the government. Philosophically, they have favored political solutions to the civil disobedience favored by al-Haqq and al-‘Amal.⁸⁹ This stance also distinguished it from groups in favor more direct physical confrontation, such as the February 14 Youth Coalition, whose methods and ideology I will discuss at more length in the next chapter.

AL-WASAT AND PRO-OPPOSITION SKEPTICS

The opinion pieces in *al-Wasat* demonstrated the variance in opinion even among those who tended to support the opposition. In general, these editorials took a much more

⁸⁸Al-Wifaq, "al-Wefaq: Official Measures Reflect Flounder and Absence of Nationalism," news release, March 27, 2013, accessed April 29, 2013, <http://Al-Wifaq.net/index.php?show=news&action=article&id=7740>.

⁸⁹ Laurence Louër, *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008),

pessimistic view of the dialogue than al-Wifaq's statements. In the article, "The Dialogue... A Dialogue Waiting for Openness" the author contended that the dialogue was merely a trap for the opposition.⁹⁰ The author believed there could be no political solution without dealing with Bahrain's underlying political injustices. The author also noted that the government's tightening security posture contradicted its supposed willingness for dialogue. Another article, "Playing with the Meaning of Consensus" referenced the earlier 2011 dialogue, arguing that since this dialogue did not succeed, there was no reason why the 2013 dialogue would succeed since nothing had changed.⁹¹ It echoed the earlier article's assessment that the dialogue "was not an honest attempt."⁹² Discussion was not necessary, since "both sides know what the other side wants."⁹³ The article "Head to Head" took a more optimistic view, asserting that the opposition was in a strong position because of its widespread public support. As the article said, "a protest is better than referendum,"

⁹⁰ Reem Khalifa, "Bahrain's Dialogue...Dialogue Waiting for Openness," editorial, Al-Wasat (Manama, Bahrain), February 10, 2013, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3809/news/read/737863/1.html>.

⁹¹ Hani al-Fardan, "Playing with the Meaning of Consensus," editorial, Al-Wasat (Manama, Bahrain), February 11, 2013, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3810/news/read/738191/1.html>.

⁹² Hani al-Fardan, "Playing with the Meaning of Consensus," editorial, Al-Wasat (Manama, Bahrain), February 11, 2013, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3810/news/read/738191/1.html>.

⁹³ Hani al-Fardan, "Playing with the Meaning of Consensus," editorial, Al Wasat (Manama, Bahrain), February 11, 2013, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3810/news/read/738191/1.html>.

as a demonstration of support.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the article emphasized the importance of equal representation. In the end, the writer was “fearing but hoping.”⁹⁵

Another article took a different view of the opposition’s relevance, addressing a group of citizens who were standing outside of the conflict between the opposition and the government.⁹⁶ Its audience was a group of citizens who claimed only to want the “return of tranquility.” The article, “A Citizen’s Letter to His Representative in the Dialogue,” claimed to speak for these disinterested citizens.⁹⁷ He argued that what all Bahrainis really want is “social justice,” noting sarcastically that “this is the 21st century.” It called on the government to implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry Report and fight government corruption. Although the article carefully refrained from arguing for “regime change,” it referenced the martyrs, following the opposition’s official stance, but it also noted that there was much danger of sectarianism and division in Bahrain. This article also spoke to the citizen observers in Bahrain who were not participating in the uprising but who agreed with its goals. It described the “revolution” as a nationalist rather than a sectarian cause. In this conception, the “revolution” was a quest

⁹⁴ Maryam al-Sheroogi, “Head to Head,” editorial, *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 12, 2013, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3811/news/read/738494/1.html>.

⁹⁵ Maryam al-Sheroogi, “Head to Head,” editorial, *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 12, 2013, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3811/news/read/738494/1.html>.

⁹⁶ Isa Sayar, “A Citizen’s Letter to His Representative in the Dialogue,” editorial, *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 12, 2013, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3811/news/read/738498/1.html>.

⁹⁷ Isa Sayar, “A Citizen’s Letter to His Representative in the Dialogue,” editorial, *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 12, 2013, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3811/news/read/738498/1.html>.

for justice and democracy rather than another round of Bahrain's sectarian conflict.⁹⁸ In general, these articles echoed the same conception of the goals of the uprising as al-Wifaq's press releases, but they expressed doubt that dialogue would help to achieve them

The authors of these *al-Wasat* articles assumed that their audience was composed of citizens with a vested interest in the future of Bahrain. They echoed al-Wifaq's broad conception of Bahraini citizenship and argued that the sectarian divisions were only getting in the way of cooperation to reform the government.

REPRESENTATION, LOYALTY, AND CITIZENSHIP

Almost nine months after the beginning of the dialogue, the participants had not reached an agreement, even on the first agenda item.⁹⁹ The primary reason for this is that the different political groups were pursuing entirely separate agendas. Al-Wifaq had repeatedly emphasized its demand for equal representation in the dialogue, and refused to discuss any other issues until this demand was met. For those who held the view expressed in the *Akhbar al-Khalij* article, in which the National Dialogue was represented as a benevolent gift of the royal family, this demand must have seemed nonsensical.¹⁰⁰ In their

⁹⁸ 'Isa Sayar, "A Citizen's Letter to His Representative in the Dialogue," editorial, *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 12, 2013, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3811/news/read/738498/1.html>.

⁹⁹ Elizabeth Dickinson, "All Talk," *Foreign Policy*, October 31, 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/10/31/all_talk_bahrain.

¹⁰⁰ Hala Kamel al-Deen, "The Dialogue of Truth," editorial, *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain), February 10, 2013, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.akhbar-alkhalij.com/12742/article/7038.html>.

view, it was the government's dialogue so they could structure it in whatever way they chose.

Furthermore, the inclusion of Sunni opposition societies was not part of the original plan for dialogue, but the government agreed to allow representatives from the Sunni opposition after these groups held large-scale protests. Because the Sunni opposition's stated goal in participating in the dialogue was to counter the influence of al-Wifaq, it was not surprising that the dialogue achieved so little.

Newspaper articles and statements demonstrate that in its discussion of the national dialogue, al-Wifaq and its allies were in conversation with the moderate faction of the royal family. Both sides affirmed their support for a political solution, and in its statements, al-Wifaq addressed problems without questioning the overall viability of the dialogue. Al-Wifaq strove for a political solution, its position exemplified in its protest slogan "the people want the reform of the regime" as opposed to "the people want the fall of the regime."¹⁰¹ The Sunni opposition, on the other hand, shared the royal conservative's concerns about growing Shi'i power and favored a security solution, rather than a political solution, to the continued unrest. Despite these diverging views, all of these groups were participating in the national dialogue and its discourse.

¹⁰¹ Al-Wifaq, "Summary of a Statement by al-Wifaq National Islamic Society Secretary General 'Ali Salman about Recent Development in Bahrain's Political Arena," news release, August 19, 2013, accessed November 29, 2013, http://Wefaq.net/index_lite.php?show=news&action.

The February 14 Youth Coalition, on the other hand, responded to the national dialogue by ignoring it, demonstrating their lack of interest in political solutions. As al-Wifaq issued statements discussing reconciliation and unity, February 14's protest posters called for "resistance," "sacred defense" and "occupying Manama."¹⁰² I will discuss February 14 further in the next chapter, but its lack of interest in the dialogue demonstrates that although it shared some goals with Al-Wifaq, its ideas about the government's legitimacy and the nature of Bahraini citizenship were quite different.

For all of the groups involved, the National Dialogue sparked a discussion on issues of Bahraini citizenship, the nature of governance, and national sovereignty. Representatives of the government, the Sunni opposition and the Shi'i-led opposition all participated in this discourse, explaining and justifying their definitions of democracy and citizenship.

At the heart of all these discussions lay the question of Bahraini identity, a question still very much under debate in this relatively young nation. This question was complicated by the fact that Bahrain functions as an "ethnocracy."¹⁰³ The royal family and their tribal allies were privileged above all other ethnic groups in terms of access to political power and economic opportunities. However, for many Bahraini Shi'is, the Al Khalifa and their allies were foreign invaders. For them, the true citizens of Bahrain are the Baharana, the

¹⁰² Facebook, accessed November 23, 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/Coalition14th>.

¹⁰³ Fuad I. Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980),

Shi'is who inhabited Bahrain before the Al Khalifa conquest. As Gengler notes, this narrative along with the utopian portrayal of "ancient Bahrain" has long been a powerful narrative among Bahraini Shi'is.¹⁰⁴

It is important to note that neither of these definitions of Bahraini identity made any place for the Huwala and the 'Ajam, who made up as much as 20 percent of Bahrain's citizenry¹⁰⁵ The Huwala are nontribal Sunnis from the Arabian Peninsula and the 'Ajam immigrants from Iran, many of whom are also Sunni. Although neither of these groups was included in the origin myths described above, many of these families have lived in Bahrain for decades or even centuries. Although these groups have traditionally been allied with the government, and many of them are clients of patrons within the royal family, they are excluded from the inner circle of political power.¹⁰⁶

Interestingly, although al-Wifaq's leadership and core membership were composed by the Bahama, they have chosen not to invoke the myth of "ancient Bahrain" during the uprising. Instead, it described itself as defending the citizens of Bahrain against the tyranny of the royal family. This allowed them to seek and claim a wider constituency, while appealing to the nationalistic fervor stirred up by the other Arab uprisings. Of course, this

¹⁰⁴ Justin Gengler, "Ethnic Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2011), 347

¹⁰⁵ Eric McCoy, "Iranians in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates: Migration, Minorities, and Identities in the Persian Gulf Arab States" (master's thesis, University of Arizona, 2008), 11, accessed November 24, 2013, <http://media.proquest.com/media/pq/classic/doc/1650502621/fmt/ai/rep/NPDF?hl=&cit%3Aaut>.

¹⁰⁶ A few members of these families were affiliated with the opposition, most prominently Munira Fukharo.

could be seen as a Shi'i agenda, since anything that moved Bahrain closer to a true representative democracy must empower the majority. Nevertheless, Al-Wifaq argued that a more democratic government would improve the political climate for all groups. The fact that it led a coalition that has included Sunnis and 'Ajam demonstrates that it has been successful in broadening its membership beyond the Shi'i community.

In Bahrain, citizenship can only be granted by royal decree, making the King the final arbiter of who is and who is not a citizen, and events in the beginning of the uprising have shown that the King can also strip citizenship from those citizens who have been convicted of working against the state.¹⁰⁷ According to Amnesty International, 31 Bahrainis had been stripped of their citizenship for "damage to state security" between 2011 and 2013. This implied that citizenship is determined not by ethnicity, but by behavior.

This conception of citizenship had implications for the national dialogue. By the logic that the king has authority to strip someone's citizenship, the moment a citizen started acting against the government he stops being a citizen. Therefore, the government was under no obligation to listen to the grievances of those acting against them. This also put a different interpretation on the claims of pro-government editorialists that members of the Shi'i-led opposition were not true Bahrainis.

¹⁰⁷ Amnesty International, "Bahrain Must Urgently Reinstate Nationality of 31 Opposition Figures," news release, November 5, 2013, accessed December 5, 2013, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/bahrain-must-urgently-reinstate-nationality-31-opposition-figures-2013-11-05>.

It is also important to remember that not all Bahraini political movements were represented in the dialogue. The “Sunni and Shi’i opposition groups” did not represent all Sunnis and Shi’is. Many Bahrainis’ saw the revolution not in the dialogue chamber but on the streets in protests and in clashes with the security forces. They described their actions as “sacred defense,” but the government, particularly the conservative faction of the Royal family, viewed them as terrorists. This tension, and the way it was described, is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Terrorists, Freedom Fighters, and the Terrorist State

On July 18, 2013, a car bomb exploded in the parking lot of a mosque yards away from the Royal family's palace in Riffa, south of the capital.¹⁰⁸ In its claim of responsibility, the militant group Saraya al-Ashtar described the attack as a symbolic victory against the regime at its very gates. Though no one was killed or injured, this symbolic victory for a previously obscure militant group marked a turning point in the discussion of terrorism in Bahrain.

As a term, terrorism is both powerful and ambiguous. It is also one of the most contested words in the discourse of the Bahraini uprising. When the government and its media outlets use the term terrorism they are most often referring to the acts of the February 14 Youth Coalition. When February 14 itself, or the al-Wifaq coalition refer to terrorists they are most likely referencing the government's own security forces. Each group has considered themselves to be the true Bahrainis, so those that their use of violence was justified. Therefore, February 14 considered themselves to be defending themselves against a foreign occupation, and the government considered themselves to be fighting "terrorists." Al-Wifaq was caught between these two groups and unsuccessfully tried to take a moderate position.

¹⁰⁸ Mohamed al-A'ali, "Worshippers Target of Car Blast at Mosque," *Gulf Daily News*, accessed February 16, 2014, <http://www.gulfdailynewsonline.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=35772>.

While the government has raised concerns about terrorism since February 2011, the degree of concern the pro-government media expressed has depended on events, and depended on which faction of the Royal family to which they were linked. The public's fear of terrorism provided justification for the conservative faction of the royal family's security solutions to Bahrain's problems, so the members of this faction emphasized the role of terrorists, and the government's official statements and press coverage were likely to describe the opposition through the lens of terrorism if they were affiliated with the Royal family's conservatives.

TERRORISM DISCOURSE AND CRITICAL TERRORISM STUDIES

Critical scholars explain these terms in the context of "intrastate terrorism."¹⁰⁹ The terms "terrorism" and "terrorist" do not describe a particular type of activity, but rather the status of the perpetrators in relationship to the state or other groups in power. This distinction explains how states with an official policy of not negotiating with terrorists can end up negotiating in practice with them. As soon as the government decides to negotiate with the designated group, they stop being "terrorists."¹¹⁰ This dynamic was evidenced in the example of opposition actions after the Riffa bombing. At this time the government

¹⁰⁹ Priya Dixit, "State/terrorism: Discourses of Terrorism and State Identity-Formation" (PhD diss., American University, 2009), 12, accessed February 16, 2014, <http://ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/304825585?accountid=7118>.

¹¹⁰ Priya Dixit, "State/terrorism: Discourses of Terrorism and State Identity-Formation" (PhD diss., American University, 2009), 12, accessed February 16, 2014, <http://ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/304825585?accountid=7118>.

instituted a new, broader terrorism bill, and several acts that were not previously terrorism became designated as such.

Dixit has written that the government's use of the word terrorism to describe a domestic insurgency varies as the government clashes or negotiates with them.¹¹¹ This can be seen in Bahrain: the government's discourse on the opposition varies according to the outlook for the government's national dialogue. Since the February 14 youth coalition is the group of the unofficial opposition, the government most commonly labeled them as "terrorists." It is important to examine the context in which February 14 arose and describe its supporters and goals.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE FEBRUARY 14 YOUTH COALITION

On March 16, 2011, Bahraini security forces cleared thousands of protesters from the Pearl roundabout using tear gas and police tanks. Once it was clear, they demolished the iconic Pearl Monument and the traffic circle on which it stood with bulldozers. This destruction symbolized the beginning of a government offensive against protesters, which culminated in the occupation of Bahrain by the Gulf Cooperative Council's Peninsula Shield Force (mainly made up of Saudi Arabian troops) and the imposition of the State of National Safety, which placed the country under martial law.

¹¹¹ Priya Dixit, "State/terrorism: Discourses of Terrorism and State Identity-Formation" (PhD diss., American University, 2009), 12, accessed February 16, 2014, <http://ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/304825585?accountid=7118>.

It was in this context in April 2011 that the February 14 Youth Coalition launched its Facebook page.¹¹² At first, this organization's efforts resembled those of other political groups such as the Bahrain Center for Human rights, primarily documenting destruction and injuries resulting from the security crackdown and attempting to raise awareness. The documentary efforts focused specifically on Shi'i villages such as Sitra and Karbadad, Shi'i villages which were particular targets during the crackdown. However, after a few weeks in operation, the authors of the February 14 page began to post manifestoes, schedules for protests, and professional-looking posters which protesters could print out and carry during demonstrations.

The organization's logo became a ubiquitous sight at protests in many villages.¹¹³ At the same time, Shi'i youth began to retaliate against the crackdown by barricading roads and burning tires. These activities became linked with the February 14 branded protests, and the authors of the Facebook page confirmed this link by documenting and praising the "resistance" effort of the saboteurs.¹¹⁴ The acts of civil disobedience were sporadic at first, but the roadblocks became more common after protests commemorating the first anniversary of the uprising, and these disruptive acts led increasingly to clashes with the

¹¹² Facebook, accessed November 23, 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/Coalition14th>.

¹¹³ Toby C. Jones and Ala'a Shehabi, "Bahrain's Revolutionaries," *Foreign Policy*, January 2, 2012, accessed November 23, 2013, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/01/02/bahrains_revolutionaries.

¹¹⁴ Al-Haq used similar tactics, allegedly including Molotov cocktails, during the 1995 intifada. The similarity gives credence to the suggestion that some of February 14's organizers may be former members of al-Haq. See: Fuad I. Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980),

security forces. Young revolutionaries were frequently injured or killed during these confrontations, and their martyrdom led to retaliation by their comrades.

As the violence on both sides escalated the government became increasingly concerned about “terrorism.” The roadblocks and acts of sabotage had spread to the Budaiya Highway, a major artery that you next the capital with the southern part of the island, and many of the businesses that once lined the highway closed. The conservative factions the royal family increasingly denounced the terrorist acts that were “disrupting the security of Bahrain and endangering its way of life.”¹¹⁵

THE RIFFA BOMBING, THE GOVERNMENT’S REACTION AND THE SUNNI OPPOSITION

The Riffa bombing in July 2013 marked a hardening in the government’s attitude toward February 14’s activities. Before this event, the government sometimes referred to the tire burning, road barricading and Molotov cocktail attacks as riots, vandalism, or hooliganism.¹¹⁶ These terms underplayed the seriousness of these activities, while highlighting the success of government reconciliation efforts. In the wake of the bombing, the government took a more confrontational stance towards terrorism, both legally and rhetorically. In fact, the broadening of the definition of terrorism under Bahrain’s new

¹¹⁵ See for example: Akhbar al-Khalij. “Interior Minister Speaks to Citizens: Terrorist Cell Leader Details will be Announced Soon.” February 17, 2013. Accessed March 11, 2013. <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12749/article/8312.html>. and “Rioters Go on the Rampage in Sitra,” Gulf Daily News, March 31, 2013, accessed April 27, 2013, <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=350512>.

¹¹⁶ See for example: “Rioters Go on the Rampage in Sitra,” Gulf Daily News, March 31, 2013, accessed April 27, 2013, <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=350512>

terrorism laws meant that acts that were not previously terrorist became terrorism. Many conservatives saw this as an indictment of the moderates' political strategy of negotiation with the opposition.¹¹⁷ Conservatives and conservative columnists criticized the efforts at a political solution as merely a cover for the government's inability to put down the riots. The Sunni opposition agreed with this view. Many Sunni protesters shouted "we want the Prime Minister," asking for harsher position towards the opposition.¹¹⁸ This view, expressed in the official statements of TNGOU was that the Shi'i opposition was being rewarded for its bad behavior, and that even allowing the Shi'is to air their grievances had not stopped the protesting. For them, these terrorist acts were a sign that the Shi'is were undeserving, and should be "sent back to Iran."¹¹⁹

Therefore, the government faced the challenge of how to emphasize the seriousness of the terrorist threat while at the same time demonstrating the effectiveness of the government response. The seriousness of the threat was intended to justify the government crackdown, but at the same time it made the government appear weak in the face of opposition, exposing them to criticism by TNGOU and other Sunni groups.

¹¹⁷ Elizabeth Dickinson, "All Talk," Foreign Policy, October 31, 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/10/31/all_talk_bahrain.

¹¹⁸ Justin Gengler, "Bahrain's Sunni Awakening," Middle East Report, January 17, 2012, accessed October 15, 2013, <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero011712>.

¹¹⁹ Go to Iran, image, Bahrain Religion and Politics, August 28, 2013, accessed March 27, 2014, <http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2013/08/the-big-picture-in-bahrain.html>.

The government's new, harsher position on February 14 was explicitly outlined in a short documentary produced by the Ministry of the Interior for the state broadcaster, Bahrain TV.¹²⁰ This video portrayed February 14 as a paramilitary organization similar to Hezbollah, showing clips of figures in masks and February 14 T-shirts marching in formation with flags emblazoned with February 14 logos. It also showed February 14 as an Islamist organization by showing members holding Qurans. The group is depicted as radical and organized and, in its masks, frighteningly anonymous.

It also showed flowcharts and maps demonstrating the structure and international reach of the organization. The video depicted links between the February 14 organizations and Hezbollah, Iraqi Islamist groups, and Iran.¹²¹ It also claimed that February 14 members get weapons training in Iraq and Iran, and that this training is organized by exiled opposition figure Hassan Musha'ima. It is portrayed as a "Bahraini Hezbollah" an Iran-funded religiously motivated militia. The video also outlined all of the bombings in Bahrain since 2011, implying the February 14 is behind all of these, and behind the groups that claimed responsibility for the bombings.

¹²⁰ "Bahrain: Report on the Perpetrators of Terrorism and Identification of February 14," Youtube, video file, 14:27, posted by Bahrain News Agency, June 12, 2014, accessed February 16, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=D_WBKYBXIY0.

¹²¹ "Bahrain: Report on the Perpetrators of Terrorism and Identification of February 14," Youtube, video file, 14:27, posted by Bahrain News Agency, June 12, 2014, accessed February 16, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=D_WBKYBXIY0.

In each case, it described the Ministry of Interior's response to the bombings and showed names and pictures of those who were arrested for the crimes.¹²² This showed that despite the formidable depiction of February 14, the Ministry of the Interior was capable of dealing with it. It also argued that the new powers given the government under the antiterrorism law have been effective.

The videos also showed piles of homemade guns and other improvised weapons.¹²³ The prospect of weapons in the hands the Shi'is was particularly unnerving to their opponents because the number of casualties in Bahrain remained very low, since most Bahrainis did not have access to firearms. Furthermore, Bahrain's extremely strict gun control laws have ensured that the security forces had a major advantage over the violent opposition groups that precluded any attempt to take over the government by force. The appearance of improvised guns suggested-, at least in the minds of those who saw Shi'is as a threat- that the clashes in Bahrain's streets could become much more violent and that this could lead to the sort of civil war experienced in Syria.¹²⁴

¹²² "Bahrain: Report on the Perpetrators of Terrorism and Identification of February 14," Youtube, video file, 14:27, posted by Bahrain News Agency, June 12, 2014, accessed February 16, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=D_WBKYBXIY0.

¹²³ Newspapers also frequently report that protesters break into buildings, particularly schools. To steal fire extinguishers. These fire extinguishers could be turned into an improvised launcher for Molotov cocktails. See for example this video: "Sitra Rebels attack Mercenaries with Extinguisher Weapons," Youtube, video file, 0:59, posted by AHRARMURQOBAN, January 9, 2012, accessed February 22, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WezJ8haENtM>.

¹²⁴ Pro-government editorials frequently cite Syria as an example of the results of unchecked sectarian violence. See for example Abdullah Khalifa, "Iranian Fascism and its Results", Akhbar al-Khalij (Manama,

In this depiction, terrorists were not just criminals, but soldiers in a foreign-backed transnational army. Furthermore, government media emphasized that this group represented an unprecedented danger to the state. The government implicitly argued that by committing violent acts, February 14, and by extension the rest of the Shi'i opposition revealed itself as an agent of foreign powers, specifically Iran and Hezbollah.

The bombings, some of which killed police officers, overshadowed peaceful protests in the national and international discourse on the uprising. Since the beginning of the dialogue, discussion of political solution and dominated in press coverage of the political situation. On the day after the bombing, The English-language newspaper Gulf Daily News published a front-page spread of government statements on terrorism, including a thundering denunciation by the crown prince, and many statements by the king and prime minister.¹²⁵ Following this remarkable display of royal family unanimity, the parliament passed a new and more stringent counterterrorism law.¹²⁶ Justin Gengler and other commentators described the Riffa bombing and subsequent fallout as a victory for

Bahrain), February 19, 2013, accessed March 11, 2013, <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12751/article/8693.html>.

¹²⁵ "Condemned!" Gulf Daily News (Manama, Bahrain), July 18, 2013, accessed March 23, 2014, <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/ArchiveDefault.aspx?date=07/18/2013>.

¹²⁶ Al-Jazeera, "Bahrain Boosts Penalties for 'Terror Acts,'" Al-Jazeera (Doha, Qatar), August 1, 2013, accessed March 23, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/08/2013829552575479.html>.

the conservative faction, since it swayed public opinion in favor of a stronger “law and order” approach.¹²⁷

A profile of the organization from the opposition news website *Manama Voice*, countered, saying that this view the group as an outpouring of the “popular will” that was present at the Pearl Roundabout, and frustrated by the subsequent crackdown.¹²⁸ It described February 14 leadership as ordinary citizens who stepped forward in the country’s moment of need.

THE PEARL CHARTER AND SACRED DEFENSE

For its part, the February 14 Youth Coalition considers itself a patriotic movement that sought to liberate Bahrain from foreign influence particularly the Al Khalifa. Its views were outlined in the “Pearl Charter,” an alternative to the official opposition’s “Manama Document.” This document was posted anonymously on the primary February 14 Facebook page, and signed only with the name of the February 14 Youth Coalition.¹²⁹

In this case, as with most of the statements, videos, and posters attributed to February 14, it is impossible to determine authorship. It was not even clear whether the

¹²⁷ Justin Gengler, “Royal Factionalism, the Khawalid, and the Securitization of ‘the Shī’a Problem’ in Bahrain,” *Journal of Arabian Studies: Arabia, the Gulf, and the Red Sea* 3, no. 1 (June 27, 2013), accessed October 15, 2013, doi:10.1080/21534764.2013.802944.

¹²⁸ “The February 14 Revolution Coalition: A Brief Biography,” *Manama Voice* (Manama, Bahrain), February 1, 2012, accessed October 21, 2013, http://manamavoice.com/news-news_read-7292-0.html.

¹²⁹ February 14 Youth Coalition, “Pearl Charter,” news release, October 22, 2011, accessed October 8, 2013, <https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fnotes%2F14feb-bahrain>.

Facebook page and its contents were the product of one person or an organized revolutionary leadership. Because of these questions, when discussing the ideology of the February 14 Youth Coalition I use the term “February 14” to refer to anyone who identified himself or herself as a member of February 14 either in a statement or by using one of the organization symbols as poster or a profile picture on the social media page. Given the immense amount of material available on the Internet, however, I focused mainly on items published on the oldest and most established February 14 Facebook page or on the February 14 Media Center page, which appeared to be closely affiliated with the original page and shared similar content.¹³⁰

In the Pearl Charter, February 14 professed many of the same democratic principles as al-Wifaq’s coalition, but it bluntly called for the “overthrow the regime.”¹³¹ It also emphasized the importance of “sacred defense principles, the protection of honors, defy oppression and repelling aggressors, based on the verse: whomever [sic] attacks you, attack him the same way he attacked you.”¹³²

The issue of the future political system was dismissed with the phrase “the peoples right of self-determination and giving them choice of any political system they agree on

¹³⁰ Facebook accessed November 23, 2013,
<https://www.facebook.com/search/178269738890732/likers/pages-liked>.

¹³¹ February 14 Youth Coalition, "Pearl Charter," news release, October 22, 2011, accessed October 8, 2013, <https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fnotes%2F14feb-bahrain>.

¹³² February 14 Youth Coalition, "Pearl Charter," news release, October 22, 2011, accessed October 8, 2013, <https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fnotes%2F14feb-bahrain>.

(Constitutional Monarchy, Republic, etc.) that will satisfy the people [sic] ambitions and needs.”¹³³ On the other hand, the details of the sacred defense plan took up three pages. The form of the document demonstrated that February 14’s primary concern was with the day-to-day defense of their villages against security forces, rather than any eventual political solution to the conflict. For them it was not about reforming the political system, it was about overthrowing the government.

The Pearl Charter also represented a recognition of the fact that there would not be a comparatively swift victory for the opposition, such as an Egypt and Tunisia. It also implied that it would be a long struggle against the government that needed to be properly organized. Finally, it demonstrated the authors desire to contextualize each small-scale struggle within the narrative of the “revolution.” most importantly, it countered the assertion, frequently made by the government, that the crisis was over and everything in Bahrain was fine.¹³⁴ This text put great stress on the fact that there was a “continuing revolution.”¹³⁵

The phrase “sacred defense,” which is the subject heading in the Pearl Charter, and frequently repeated phrase, is linked to the history of Iran’s defense in the face of an Iraqi

¹³³ February 14 Youth Coalition, "Pearl Charter," news release, October 22, 2011, accessed October 8, 2013, <https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fnotes%2F14feb-bahrain>.

¹³⁴ February 14 Youth Coalition, "Pearl Charter," news release, October 22, 2011, accessed October 8, 2013, <https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fnotes%2F14feb-bahrain>.

¹³⁵ February 14 Youth Coalition, "Pearl Charter," news release, October 22, 2011, accessed October 8, 2013, <https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fnotes%2F14feb-bahrain>.

invasion. The imagery of Bahrain's protest posters draws upon some of the same Shi'i imagery, including the hand that is the symbol of the Ahl al-Bayt, or the family of the prophet.¹³⁶ This symbol was a common icon in the revolution in Iran, particularly during the Iran-Iraq war. On February 14 posters, the symbol was surrounded by a circle of barbed wire, which is resting on to crossed swords.¹³⁷

Some of the posters used very explicit Shi'i language, such as "Hussein, an example for revolutionaries."¹³⁸ Another read: "Karbala is our revolution."¹³⁹ Similarly, photos and videos of February 14 protests showed demonstrators wearing shrouds emblazoned with the February 14 logo.¹⁴⁰ The shrouds symbolized their willingness to die for their cause and associated with the celebration of 'Ashura.

All of these symbols were powerful rallying points for Bahrain Shi'is and they demonstrated that February 14 considered itself a Shi'i movement. Since February 14 described itself as the standard-bearer of Bahrain's revolution, this meant that, in their

¹³⁶ Peter J. Chelkowski and Hamid Dabashi, *Staging a Revolution: The Art of Persuasion in the Islamic Republic of Iran* (London: Booth-Clibborn Editions, 2000),

¹³⁷ Sacred Defense, image, Bahrain Online, January 13, 2012, accessed February 16, 2014, <http://www.bahrainonline.org/showthread.php?t=334765>.

¹³⁸ February 14 Youth Coalition, *Program for the "Hussein, an Example for Revolutionaries." Event*, image, Facebook, November 6, 2013, accessed December 5, 2013, https://scontent-afw.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-ash3/s720x720/1391441_646440668740301_119452403_n.jpg.

¹³⁹ February 14th Youth Coalition, *Karbala is Our Revolution.*, image, Facebook, October 25, 2013, accessed March 18, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/Coalition14th?hc_location=timeline.

¹⁴⁰ February 14 Youth Coalition, Resistant Zeinabat, photograph, Facebook, October 26, 2013, accessed March 18, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/Coalition14th#>.

view, it was a Shi'i revolution. When February 14 talked about "the people" or "Bahrainis" they meant the Shi'is.

Government supporters, particularly the journalists working for the Al Watan newspaper took the Shi'i rhetoric as a sign that the members of February 14 Youth Coalition were Iranian agents. However, this imagery had power for Shi'is around the world, not just those who supported Iran, and it could also be a powerful mobilizing tool for an anonymous, relatively new organization like February 14.

Although February 14 asserted its commitment to peaceful protest, it used confrontational, often military, words and images on the posters it regularly publishes on its Facebook page. Each of the posters featured the name of the week's "campaign."¹⁴¹ The phrase sacred defense was used seven times in 2013, others reference the battle of Karbala, "Manama storm," and "the days of the martyrs," "steadfast and rebellious," "Zainab's revolution."¹⁴² The titles of a series of campaigns also used the word occupy, as in "occupy Manama" and "occupy Budayia."¹⁴³ This was obviously a reference to the worldwide occupy movement, whose use of social media and lack of central organization, was an inspiration to many Arab Spring movements. However, the word occupy also had a military

¹⁴¹ Facebook, accessed November 23, 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/Coalition14th>.

¹⁴² Zainab was the sister of Hussein, and one of the survivors of the Karbala massacre. For many Shi'a, she is a role model for female revolutionaries.

¹⁴³ Facebook, accessed November 23, 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/Coalition14th>.

connotation, and a connection to the February 14 Youth Coalition's characterization of Saudi forces' presence in Bahrain as an occupation.

Many of February 14's slogans implied a comparison between the Bahraini government and the Saudi forces in Bahrain and Israeli occupation forces in Palestine. They described some of their protest campaigns as Bahraini "intifada." They also signed their infrequent official statements as "from occupied Bahrain."¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, one of their most popular posters is posed in a way that echoes a famous photograph of a Palestinian child confronting an Israeli tank.¹⁴⁵ Given the hostility to Israel in the Arab world, comparing Bahrain's government to it was an uncompromising statement.

The main February 14 Facebook page and many of its imitators also feature videos of actual tire fires and clashes with the police, demonstrating that "sacred defense" is not just rhetoric. These videos also serve as memorials to the fighters of the "continuing revolution."¹⁴⁶ The presence of barricades and large crowds of protesters on a major highway or in the capital forced the population to acknowledge that the revolution continued. Its ability to gather large crowds also demonstrates that the organization has an

¹⁴⁴ Facebook, accessed November 23, 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/Coalition14th>.

¹⁴⁵ February 14 Youth Coalition, Oh the Masses Are Proficient in Revolution, image, Facebook, December 21, 2011, accessed October 29, 2013, https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/OkWscGD3blUc9wmQwemkEABgoXGFob60EvhiJAwlyS4gngSWcJRgECB3_vjSkd0Pg6zojc-kxkpg9cDvr_4cnPSkt9wjPzUjPm-_MXa-vN5FZMXhapIbg8J8.

¹⁴⁶ Facebook, accessed January 17, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/Coalition14th>.

existence outside of Facebook, and raised profile in comparison to the other opposition groups.

All of this rhetoric demonstrated that February 14 saw itself as fighting a war on behalf of citizens against an illegitimate “foreign” government. It justified its violence as legitimate self-defense against a foreign occupation that described not only the occupation of the Peninsula Shield Force, but also the Al Khalifas. The imagery of its posters in the rhetoric of its slogans make the argument that the Al Khalifas’ rule of Bahrain is a century-long occupation. They are not true Bahrainis, both because they came originally from the Najaf, and because they are not Shi’i.

At the same time, February 14’s rhetoric suggested that its members were “more Bahraini” than other Bahraini Shi’is because they lived in the countryside like the Shi’is in “Ancient Bahrain.” They also see themselves as having suffered more under the Al Khalifa government and fighting harder for the revolution. In their view, this made them better Bahrainis than parliamentarians who are willing to negotiate with the government.

SARAYA AL-ASHTAR AND BAHRAIN FIST

After the Riffa bombing, a group calling itself Saraya al-Ashtar claimed responsibility.¹⁴⁷ According to a posted statement, they were not intending to target the mosque, but rather the nearby Royal Court, as a demonstration that revolutionaries could

¹⁴⁷ Saraya al-Ashtar, Facebook update, July 17, 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/سرايا الأشتار>.

reach even to the heart of royal power. The statement also claimed that the bombing was “in defense of the honor of” Rehana al-Mosawi, a woman who was strip-searched by police after being arrested for allegedly involvement in the plot to bomb the Bahraini Formula One race in 2012.¹⁴⁸ This violation of female honor sparked large protests by all of Bahrain’s opposition groups and a statement by that called on Bahrainis to “defend the honor of the woman of Bahrain.”¹⁴⁹ For this group, the revelation of their religious as well as a political cause.

Saraya al-Ashtar also claimed responsibility for a few other bombings in several attacks on policemen in Shi’i villages. Their statements all had heavy religious overtones including frequent quotations from the Quran. The group also refers to itself as “men of God.” This religious language distinguishes Saraya al-Ashtar’s statements from those of February 14. February 14 occasionally references religious events such as ‘Ashura or religious concepts such as martyrdom, but is more frequently described as a struggle in secular terms as a military operation or a struggle for “human rights.” In February 14 statements, religious imagery is implied. In Saraya al-Ashtar’s statements it was used directly

¹⁴⁸ Saraya al-Ashtar, Facebook update, July 17, 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/سرايا الأشتار>.

¹⁴⁹ Al-Wifaq, "Statement Issued by the Prominent Clerics in Bahrain on the Degrading Treatment of Rayhana al-Musawi," news release, July 14, 2013, accessed February 22, 2014, <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/07/14/21376/>.

Another group which linked itself with Saraya al-Ashtar, at least rhetorically, was Bahrain Fist. It describes itself on its Twitter bio in these words: “Fist is a level of rebellion which began on January 24, 2012 to crush and deter Hamad’s mercenaries. This stage is considered the core of the rebellion in Bahrain.” This description was superimposed over a picture of Crown Prince some on over the caption “the Salman dialogue does not represent me” in English and Arabic.¹⁵⁰ The group launched in January 2012 with a video announcing its intention to “crush” the “mercenaries” if they target the entrance of villages.¹⁵¹ Blockading the entrances to villages with police cars and tanks was a common police response to protests in the Shi’i villages, so Bahrain Fist’s plan would guarantee clashes with the police. They also advocated the use of Molotov cocktails far more directly and openly than February 14.

The group’s inaugural video emphasized that they were endorsed by February 14. They, in turn, endorsed and frequently praised Saraya al-Ashtar on their Twitter account, addressing them as “men of God,” and adding “may God grant you victory.”¹⁵² Like Saraya al-Ashtar, Bahrain Fist frequently referenced the Quran and uses religious language in its statements and tweets.

¹⁵⁰ Twitter, last modified January 24, 2012, <https://twitter.com/BahrainFist>.

¹⁵¹ “Revolutionaries’ Fist Statement Preparing for Violence in Bahrain,” Youtube, video file, 2:12, posted by BahrainPulse, January 24, 2012, accessed February 22, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FbQIoubPTk>.

¹⁵² Bahrain First, Twitter post, February 19, 2014, 6:20 p.m., <https://twitter.com/BahrainFist/status/436143144837873664>.

A third group, Media Center of the Revolution in Bahrain, released a video on February 13, 2014 showing people and masks assembling a bomb, in room full of Molotov cocktails. The video also used religious imagery. The opening shot shows a Koran open to Surah al-Anfal (The Spoils of War).¹⁵³ A shot at the end of the video showed the banners of several of Bahrain the unofficial opposition societies including, Alliance for a Republic (i.e. the Bahrain Freedom Movement, al-Haq Movement, and al-Wafa' Islamic Party), the Youth Coalition of the February 14th, the Salvation Movement, and the Islamic Action Society (al-'Amal).¹⁵⁴ Thus, the Media Center of the Revolution in Bahrain, which seems to mainly produce and distribute videos appears to be claiming that these unofficial opposition groups supported and intended to carry out a bombing campaign on February 14, 2014.¹⁵⁵

Saraya al-Ashtar and Bahrain Fist and the growing number of groups like them took a position on the situation in Bahrain similar to February 14, but they espoused violence and used religious imagery to a much greater degree. While February 14 described itself

¹⁵³ "Bahraini Film: Coming," Youtube, video file, 3:30, posted by Media Center of the Revolution in Bahrain, February 13, 2013, accessed February 22, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVJC7eS2Zt4>.

¹⁵⁴ Al-Haq and al-'Amal have been officially disbanded by the government.

¹⁵⁵ This episode demonstrated the weakness of February 14 strategy using symbols to construct a movement and portraying all arms struggles in Bahrain as part of the February 14 movement. Saraya al-Ashtar uses the red and white symbol portraying the Pearl Monument with two machine guns, which looked very similar to the February 14 logo, and it communicated primarily through Facebook. Therefore, to those unfamiliar with these movements, and to those who constructed a similarity between the two movements, they look very similar. Furthermore, since February 14 leadership was completely anonymous, it is difficult for it to assert its authority and denounce the bombing. This was particularly true once some of the February 14 fan pages expressed their support for Saraya al-Ashtar.

as a self-defense and resistance movement, these other groups were waging war on them in the name of God.

AL-WIFAQ, FEBRUARY 14, AND VIOLENCE

Al-Wifaq had an equivocal relationship with February 14. On the one hand, its confrontational methods were directly contrary to al-Wifaq's own policies, represents a challenge to its leadership. On the other hand, February 14 was a considerable force in the opposition particularly among Shi'i youth. Furthermore, the continuous disruption caused by February 14 has forced the government to at least appear to consider opposition demands. Therefore al-Wifaq did not want to risk denouncing February 14 and its methods and losing this leverage.

In late January 2013, al-Wifaq's spiritual leader Sheikh Isa al-Qasim issued a statement, described as a fatwa that declared that "terrorism is against Islam."¹⁵⁶ The statement was likely a response to frequent demands by the government that al-Wifaq denounce violence.¹⁵⁷ However, the statement condemned terrorism rather than violence, and was ignored February 14 that did not consider its tactics to be terrorism. In fact, an earlier statement by al-Qasim seemed to encourage sacred defense tactics: "Whoever you

¹⁵⁶ Isa al-Qasim, "Fatwa by Ayatollah Qassim: Terrorism is Forbidden in Islam," news release, January 10, 2014, accessed February 17, 2014, <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2014/01/11/25635/>.

¹⁵⁷ Sayyed Abdul Qader, "The Beginning of the End of the Dialogue: The Opposition Refuses to Condemn the Violence and Iranian Interference," editorial, *Akhbar al-Khalij*, February 21, 2013, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12753/article/8941.html>.

see abusing women, you must crush them.”¹⁵⁸ This call was likely linked to an incident in the village of Eker, in which police apparently struck women who were attempting to prevent the man’s arrest.¹⁵⁹ Al-Qasim made a virtually identical statement – sometimes also described as a fatwa – in July 2013 in the wake of the arrest of Rehana al-Mousawi.¹⁶⁰ Pro-government sources pointed to this “fatwa” as the driving force behind the Riffa bombing. Twitter statements by Ali Salman clarified that al-Wifaq only condoned violence as self-defense in situations where the attack had clearly been established or when violations of property had occurred.¹⁶¹ He emphasized al-Wifaq’s commitment to peaceful protest, but added that when violence, was justifiable to defend oneself. Of course, the term “self-defense” may be as elastic as the term “terrorism.”¹⁶²

The contentious role of religious rhetoric and the way it was used by different groups these also demonstrated that the importance of religious identity in Bahrain. Although al-Wifaq generally

¹⁵⁸ "For the Sake of our Opposition," Youtube, video file, 2:21, posted by 'Isa al-Qasim, January 20, 2012, accessed February 22, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1loi6Dt0WSo&feature=plcp&context=C348dff6UDOEgsToPDskIY9qqumStBcLYQTvkDd4eA>

¹⁵⁹ "Why Eker Is Angry," Youtube, video file, 1:41, posted by Aleker News·, January 21, 2012, accessed February 22, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eI5hV3WYtIc>.

¹⁶⁰ Al-Wifaq, "Statement Issued by the Prominent Clerics in Bahrain on the Degrading Treatment of Rayhana al-Musawi," news release, July 14, 2013, accessed February 22, 2014, <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/07/14/21376/>.

¹⁶¹ Al-Wifaq, Twitter post, January 23, 2012, 12:31, <https://twitter.com/ALWEFAQ/status/161365445599952896>.

¹⁶² This swiftly issued clarifying statement suggested a tension between al-Qasim’s views, or at least the terms in which he expressed them, and how al-Wifaq stance as a political organization. It also suggested that while his support provided al-Wifaq with religious legitimacy, his statements could also be a liability as al-Wifaq attempted to negotiate with the government.

chose not to use religious language in its statements, it is an Islamist group and its relationship with al-Qasim contributed to its influence. Thus, the other groups that employed religious language were competing with al-Wifaq for religious legitimization.

Regardless of al-Qasim's and al-Wifaq's intentions, the elasticity of the term terrorism allowed every groups to read what they wanted to into the statement condemning it. Nevertheless, the statement did represent an implicit acknowledgment that terrorism interest in Bahrain and as a problem. It was also a more outspoken denunciation that the statement issued after the bombing in Riffa, which suggested that the bombing was fabricated.

Nevertheless, the careful wording of al-Wifaq's statement on these issues also refrained from condemning February 14 and other violent groups either implicitly or explicitly. These groups, February 14 or particular represented a powerful force, particularly among Bahranah from the villages, who are important part of al-Wifaq's support base.

While al-Wifaq never mentioned February 14 by name in any of its statements, or referenced any of its activities, it claimed members of February 14 as part of the opposition it represented when giving details of arrests, deaths, and prosecutions. Members of February 14, since they confronted the police directly and violently were frequently arrested, it was likely that a large percentage of the students under arrest, whose cause al-Wifaq has energetically taken up are members of February 14. Al-Wifaq is only willing to

discuss members of the group directly once they have become either martyrs all prisoners of conscience.¹⁶³

Furthermore, al-Wifaq was in very difficult position because of its lack control over February 14. Implicit in the dialogue was the promise on the part of the opposition to bring an end to protest if its demands were met. However, given the disconnect between al-Wifaq and February 14, it was unlikely that it would be able to convince February 14 to stop protesting. This was likely one of the reasons by al-Wifaq's refusal to condemn violence directly, this leadership knew that their statements were likely be ignored. Similarly, the presence of violent partisans on the street also kept up the pressure on the on the government as al-Wifaq made its demands.

STATE TERRORISM

Although al-Wifaq addressed the accusations of terrorism made against the opposition in one statement, more frequently they dismissed account terrorist violence as an attempt to discredit the opposition. One statement was titled "The Old Story of Terror Cells Is Boring."¹⁶⁴ The statement went on to allege that, "the regime did not show a single evidence to prove its doubtful accusations. All that it provided were merely coerced confessions, which have been taken under torture. This old scenario is being repeated every

¹⁶³ "Pro-Democracy Detained University and Schools Students, Are Prevented from Taking Their Exams," news release, <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/03/31/18640/>.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Wifaq, "Al-Musawi: The Old Story of Terror Cells is Boring," news release, March 2, 2013, accessed February 22, 2014, <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/03/02/7594/>.

time.”¹⁶⁵ The vast majority of al-Wifaq’s statements that discussed terrorism dealt with state terror. Some statements accused the government of some of the systemic terrorism by authorizing crackdowns on peaceful protesters and imposing security cordons and villages. In the words of one statement, this “terrorist” crackdown arose from a “destructive despotic mentality has been the strongest and is dominating the country steering towards security escalation amid absence of a real political project.”¹⁶⁶ Another statement described the conservative faction within the government “official terror cell.”¹⁶⁷ Other statements focused on individual acts of violence by policemen. Stories that policeman were throwing Molotov cocktails at protesters provoked particular outrage on opposition social media because Molotov cocktails became a symbol of opposition terrorism which has been frequently denounced by the government.¹⁶⁸ This raised a difficult question for al-Wifaq: why were they negotiating with a “terrorist government?”

PRO-GOVERNMENT VIGILANTISM

While the government’s emphasis on the terrorist nature of the opposition gives them legal support, this also leaves them open to criticism for continually failing to prevent

¹⁶⁵ Al-Wefaq, "Al-Musawi: The Old Story of Terror Cells is Boring," news release, March 2, 2013, accessed February 22, 2014, <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/03/02/7594/>.

¹⁶⁶ Al-Wifaq, "Opposition Parties: Two Years of Terror Have Failed to Undermine the Demand for Democracy," news release, March 13, 2013, accessed March 18, 2014, <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/03/16/18401/>.

¹⁶⁷ Al-Wifaq, "Al-Musawi: The Old Story of Terror Cells is Boring," news release, March 2, 2013, accessed February 22, 2014, <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/03/02/7594/>.

¹⁶⁸ Al-Wifaq, "Al-Musawi: The Old Story of Terror Cells is Boring," news release, March 2, 2013, accessed February 22, 2014, <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/03/02/7594/>.

terrorist acts. This concern with security issues has become a rallying point for the Sunni opposition particularly TNGOU and the al-Fatih Youth Coalition.

The al-Fatih Youth Coalition was a more militant offshoot of TNGOU, loosely organized by means of social media in a similar way to February 14.¹⁶⁹ Although the group's manifesto professed goals similar to those of al-Wifaq and its allies. This group apparently clashed violently with Shi'i protest groups in the street and administered vigilante justice. "Al-Fatih" is a reference to the conquest of Bahrain by the Al Khalifa, and in Arabic can also refer to the opening of the country to Islam, so the term was very offensive to the country's Shi'is. The groups still regularly publish statements condemning the Shi'i opposition on its blog, but it appeared to be less active in the streets since the end of 2012. The spring and summer of 2012 were a particularly active time for pro-government vigilantes. Numerous videos posted to social media reported attacks on protesters. Social media reports indicated another rise in vigilante violence in summer and early fall 2013, culminating in the firebombing of al-Wifaq's headquarters in September. Al-Wifaq's statement reported that it was graffitied with "pro-regime slogans."¹⁷⁰ This conflict between citizens contributed greatly to sectarian tension in Bahrain, as both sides considered the government unjustly favored the opposing sect.

¹⁶⁹ Justin Gengler, "Are Bahrain's Sunnis Still Awake?" Sada, June 25, 2012, accessed October 3, 2013, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/06/25/are-bahrain-s-sunnis-still-awake/caoa>.

¹⁷⁰ Al-Wifaq, "Summary of a Statement by al-Wifaq National Islamic Society Secretary General 'Ali Salman about Recent Development in Bahrain's Political Arena," news release, August 19, 2013, accessed November 29, 2013

TERRORISM, SELF-DEFENSE, AND LAW AND ORDER

The government and the pro-government media in Bahrain increasingly tended to portray the opposition as a whole and particularly unofficial opposition groups such as February 14 as terrorists. This increasing focus on terrorism and security in Bahrain helped support the perspective of the conservative faction in the royal family. They had always advocated a crackdown as the ideal solution notable conservatives and when the Ministry of the Interior (responsible for the police) and the commander-in-chief of the Bahrain Defense Forces, both of them likely gained power as they became more prominent in dealing with the crisis.

At the same time, the emphasis on the continuing security threat led to criticism by Sunni opposition groups. They perceived the government as not doing enough to prevent these terrorist acts. This perception of government inadequacy has led to dozens of vigilante attacks on protesters and other Shi'is, although the exact magnitude and scope of vigilantism has been difficult to determine.

Some opposition groups, most notably February 14, did espouse violence is an extension of their civil disobedience campaigns although they do not consider it to be terrorism. They described their acts as sacred defense, violence made necessary by the unprovoked aggression of the police against peaceful protesters. February 14 also appeared to be linked, at least rhetorically, with groups that more openly advocated the use of bombs and improvised firearms to attack police, and do so in religiously charged language.

Al-Wifaq's response to the violence was ambivalent. Although they denounced terrorism as un-Islamic, they endorsed the use of violence for self-defense, particularly the defense of women, and they routinely campaigned for the release of members of February 14 who been arrested, and described them as "prisoners of conscience." While al-Wifaq disapproved of February 14's methods, particularly as they make al-Wifaq's goal of a negotiated settlement more difficult, they recognize the power and appeal of the group among Shi'is. Furthermore, maintaining a good relationship with February 14 and its constituents would have been vital to persuading people to abide by any settlement al-Wifaq achieved. Whether al-Wifaq retained any authority over February 14 and its supporters was uncertain; however, al-Wifaq needed to appear to maintain control in order to retain that the relevance as leader of the opposition.

Since both the government and some factions of the opposition in Bahrain used violence, the question of terrorism is really a matter of legitimacy. If Bahrain's government was legitimate than the violent acts against it were terrorism, but if it was an illegitimate occupying force than these violent acts could be considered a struggle for liberation. In order to make the case that the government was illegitimate, February 14 made the argument that only indigenous Baharana are true Bahrainis. On the other hand, both the government and the Sunni opposition argued that the use of violence in and of itself made groups is such as February 14 illegitimate. Al-Wifaq was caught in the middle of this conflict since it agrees with many of the positions of the unofficial opposition but it was a

reminder argue that the government is illegitimate. The issue of who had the right to use violence was one of the major conflicts that divided the political factions in Bahrain.

Chapter 3: Expatriates and Citizens

On March 14, 2011, 14 men gathered outside of an apartment building in Manama, Bahrain, that housed Pakistani workers, and called to the residents to come out. When no one answered, the men proceeded to break down doors and drag out the Pakistanis inside, shouting: “You Pakistanis come here and work in the security forces. We will kill all Pakistanis! Go back to being a laborer!”¹⁷¹

This story, told to Human Rights Watch researchers by one of the survivors, marked a low point in the relationship between Bahrainis and the expatriate workers who make up more than 40 percent of the population and over 60 percent of the labor force.¹⁷² Expatriate workers have been an important part of Bahrain’s economy since oil was discovered in 1932, and their presence has continually raised concern about their effect on national culture and their danger to national security. However, the Shi’i uprising that began in February 2011 highlighted the religious differences between the expatriate and the majority of citizens, and the role of expatriates as a tool of the government. Bahrain’s government reported that gangs of Shi’is killed four Southeast Asian workers and injured 88 more during the government crackdown on opposition protesters March 13 and 14, and pro-government media reported dozens of later attacks. Since the government made

¹⁷¹ Human Rights Watch, *For a Better Life*, publication (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2012), accessed November 23, 2012, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2012/10/01/better-life-2>.

¹⁷² Magdalena Maria Karolak and Anjum Razzaque, "Marginalizing or Blending of Transnational Workers: Case of the Kingdom of Bahrain" (paper presented at LSCAC), 2.

considerable political capital of its role as a protector of “poor migrants,” the statistics may be exaggerated, but international human rights organizations have confirmed several incidents.¹⁷³ Citing these examples, the official media characterized the opposition as intolerant religious extremists. This raised an interesting question: how did both the government and the opposition frame the issue of expatriate workers, given the importance of Bahraini identity to the discourses after the uprising?

EXPATRIATES AND THE ECONOMY IN BAHRAIN

The oil discovered in Bahrain in the 1936 brought wealth. It also brought a frenzy of building and modernization, which required the import of thousands of cheap, low-skill workers. Now, facing the imminent exhaustion of its oil fields, Bahrain attempted to build a finance industry from scratch, which requires them to imported educated and experienced professionals, many of them from India.¹⁷⁴ In 1989 the government began several initiatives for increasing the number of citizens in the workforce, known as “Bahrainization,” but the salaries that citizens demanded were so much higher than those that expatriate workers would accept that there is little incentive for business owners to employ nationals.¹⁷⁵ This became problematic because as Bahrain’s oil wealth decreased,

¹⁷³ Human Rights Watch, *For a Better Life*, publication (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2012), 104, accessed November 23, 2012, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2012/10/01/better-life-2>. 102.

¹⁷⁴ Andrzej Kapiszewski, *Nationals and Expatriates: Population and Labour Dilemmas of the Gulf Cooperation Council States* (Reading, English: Ithaca Press, 2001), 60.

¹⁷⁵ Andrzej Kapiszewski, *Nationals and Expatriates: Population, Dilemmas of the Gulf Cooperation Council States* (Reading, English: Ithaca Press, 2001) 212.

Bahrain diversified its economy, becoming a center of finance and international business. The multinational corporations that have moved into Bahrain have recruited their own expatriates.

The majority of expatriate workers in Bahrain were Sunni Muslims from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the Philippines.¹⁷⁶ Many of these were laborers, domestic workers, or small shopkeepers. Some Indians occupied managerial positions in the private sector, and Pakistanis, in particular, were notorious as members of the security forces.¹⁷⁷ The government did not reveal how many members of the security forces were expatriates, but among the opposition it became a truism that the riot police are Pakistani. Also, while the government apparently gave citizenship to some Pakistani members of the security forces opposition columnists and spokespeople made the rhetorical assumption that the government gives citizenship all of them.

The existing literature on expatriates in the Gulf describes a fear of cultural “asianization” and a resulting hostility towards expatriates that did not seem to be present in Bahrain’s media in the period I studied.¹⁷⁸ This seemed remarkable given the prominence

¹⁷⁶ Andrzej Kapiszewski, *Nationals and Expatriates: Population, Dilemmas of the Gulf Cooperation Council States* (Reading, English: Ithaca Press, 2001) 65.

¹⁷⁷ Alex Delmar-Morgan and Tom Wright, "Bahrain's Foreign Police Add to Tensions," *Wall Street Journal* (New York), March 25, 2011, accessed November 23, 2012, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703784004576220762563363574.html>.

¹⁷⁸ See for example: Paul Dresch, "Foreign Matter: The Place of Strangers in Gulf Society," 2006, in *Globalization and the Gulf*, ed. John W. Fox, Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, and Mohammed Al Murtawa (London: Routledge, 2006), 200-223.

of the discourse on “foreignness” in Bahrain. However, expatriates made up less than 50 percent of the population of Bahrain, as opposed to more than 80 percent in the UAE therefore, although expatriates make up a large proportion of Bahrain’s population and an even larger proportion of its workforce Bahrain did not have the sense of being completely surrounded by foreigners.

Bahrain’s uprising created a dynamic that was unusual in the Gulf. The government and its supporters in the Sunni community saw themselves as aligned with expatriates against their Shi’i citizens. Shi’i members of the opposition, both al-Wifaq and the unofficial opposition saw expatriates as the enemy. They were further outraged by the fact that expatriates seem to have more access to economic opportunities and more of the governments respect than “true Bahraini citizens.” It is important to note that even if foreign-born residents gain citizenship Shi’is at least considered them “expatriates.”

When the expatriate labor system of the Gulf was designed, planners always assumed that the expatriates’ presence would be temporary. They would come to Bahrain for a construction project or would work in domestic service for a few years and then return home. However, in Bahrain, as in the rest of the Gulf, many expatriates lived there for their entire lives, but they had almost no chance at citizenship or permanent residency. Bahrain was the only country in the Gulf that offered citizenship to expatriates, and because it was unusual, it was seen by many Shi’is as part of a plot to change Bahrain’s demographics.

Human rights organizations regarded Bahrain as the most progressive of the Gulf countries in regard to immigration and labor issues. Of all the Gulf States, Bahrain was the least dependent on foreign labor, but it was still dependent in many areas. The Bahrain 2030 report, released by the Crown Prince's Economic Development Board, described the skilled expatriate population as one of Bahrain's competitive advantages. Expatriate professionals from India and the Levant have been important to building Bahrain's financial and tourism sectors.

In 2009, Bahrain reformed its traditional Kafala system of sponsorship, according to which each worker's visa was dependent on a sponsor, to a system in which the majority of sponsorships were held by a government agency, the Labor Market Regulatory Authority.¹⁷⁹ Human Rights Watch and other international organizations praised the step, but called for the protection to be expanded to domestic workers, who were the most vulnerable to exploitation by their sponsors. The activist organization the Bahrain Center for Human Rights was more critical of the government reforms, arguing that the reforms are merely cosmetic and that the government refused almost all applications to change jobs and ignored complaints about employers.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Human Rights Watch, *For a Better Life*, publication (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2012), accessed November 23, 2012, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2012/10/01/better-life-2>. 11-25

¹⁸⁰ "Grave allegations of a hate-attack against a migrant worker confirms BCHR's worries in the aftermath of illegal naturalization," Bahrain Center for Human Rights, accessed November 23, 2012, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/629>.

Since 2009, the government had promised further reforms, but as of 2014, these reforms of not been enacted. Although the government has passed laws restricting child labor and human and sex trafficking these issues continued to be prominent.¹⁸¹ Nevertheless, government spokespeople tended to cite the labor reforms as a counter to al-Wifaq's coalition's argument that the government was not interested in human rights. Thus, this expatriate labor reform allowed Bahrain's government to demonstrate that they were a modern and progressive state that cared about human rights.

Innocent Victims or Loyal Defenders

The *Gulf Daily News* newspaper targeted an expatriate audience and covered their issues extensively. It published many articles praising the labor reforms, but also published instances of exploitation and neglect. Although pro-government in its political coverage, it can be extremely critical of government policies in regard to issues dealing with expatriates. It also frequently celebrated the expatriate populations of Bahrain by describing cultural events. The *Gulf Daily News*' expatriate focus was not surprising given that the majority of its journalists were also Indian or Arab expatriates.

In general, the rest of the pro-government media did not discuss expatriates except as victims of the opposition's violence. These articles argued that the opposition's

¹⁸¹ Human Rights Watch, *For a Better Life*, publication (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2012), accessed November 23, 2012, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2012/10/01/better-life-2>.

victimization of expatriates belied the human rights ideals that al-Wifaq's coalition espoused. They accused Shi'is of "the practice of violence against people with no connection to the events, laying waste their rights and humiliating their dignity and shed their blood just because they are Asian foreigners," inverting the opposition's argument about anti-Shi'i discrimination, using nearly the same phrases. These articles further defined the government as a defender of human rights by emphasizing the labor reforms and safety reforms. In this depiction, expatriates are passive and innocent victims of Shi'i aggression in need of the government to protect them.

In one opinion piece, the author described an expatriate worker who was fined and imprisoned for stealing a piece of fruit from a tree.¹⁸² The case provoked outrage, and the editorial writer attributed the hard-heartedness of the owner who refused to drop the complaint to the "Molotov culture which has nurtured hate (in some villages), inhumanity and moral breakdown" since the uprising.¹⁸³ Jones pointed out that the narrative that the Shi'i opposition is oppressing the expatriates become so widespread that a columnist could blame the Shi'i opposition for completely unrelated miscarriage of justice.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Manama Voice. "Bahraini Street Making Fun of Sentence Passed on an Asian Over 3 Pieces of Fruit" *Manama Voice*, February 2, 2014. Accessed March 1, 2014. <http://www.manamavoice.com/>

¹⁸³ Anwar Abdulrahman, "Has It Come to This?" editorial, *Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain), February 3, 2013, accessed March 1, 2014, <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=346798>.

¹⁸⁴ Marc Owen Jones, "Fallen Fruit, Foreign Plots and Road Rage: Today in Bahrain," Marc Owen Jones (blog), entry posted February 13, 2013, accessed March 19, 2014, <http://marcowenjones.wordpress.com/?s=fruit>.

The pro-government media also praised the security forces. In its statements, the Ministry of the Interior often described policemen who were killed as “martyrs” or “martyrs for duty.”¹⁸⁵ Unlike the other expatriates, these police had were described as having agency and could choosing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the government. The Sunni opposition took this further, holding several recent rallies in support of the police and demanding that they be given better protection and be allowed to use lethal weapons.¹⁸⁶ Thus, the loyal foreigners were contrasted with the disloyal citizens.

Sunni group TNGOU stated as one of its founding aims that it seeks to implement “security and stability for all Bahrainis and expatriates.”¹⁸⁷ They also emphasized the need to protect “our brave police officers who faced daily violence in the streets, these men who protect all citizens will be can live in peace.”¹⁸⁸ Despite this emphasis however, that was the only TNGOU statement that mentioned expatriates. They view the current unrest as conflict between Shi’i citizens and Sunni citizens, with expatriates being largely irrelevant,

¹⁸⁵ Marc Owen Jones, "Systemic Police Deviance and Police Reform in Bahrain" (paper presented at Policing Protests in the Middle East Workshop, University of Durham, Durham, UK, April 26, 2012), accessed March 1, 2014, <http://marcowenjones.wordpress.com/2012/04/28/systemic-police-deviance-police-reform-in-bahrain-work-in-progress/>.

¹⁸⁶ Daily Tribune, "Citizens Join against Terror," Daily Tribune (Manama, Bahrain), February 23, 2014, accessed March 1, 2014, <http://dt.bh/citizens-join-against-terror/>.

¹⁸⁷ "The Story of the National Gathering of Unity," Altajama3, accessed October 15, 2013, <http://altajam3.org/portal/arabic>

¹⁸⁸ "The Story of the National Gathering of Unity," Altajama3, accessed October 15, 2013, <http://altajam3.org/portal/arabic>

except as incidental allies. From that perspective, expatriates did not have a stake in the current issues.

EXPATRIATES AND THE SHI'I OPPOSITION

One of the first demands made in the manifesto that the February 14 Youth Coalition published on Facebook was an end to political naturalization. It was also a key demand of al-Wifaq's coalition. An article published by the Bahrain Center for Human Rights was accompanied by a short documentary, which claimed to show interviews with Saudi expatriates who had illegally obtained Bahraini citizenship.¹⁸⁹ Under Bahraini law, citizenship could be granted to people who were residents of Bahrain for more than five years, at the discretion of the government. Several of those interviewed for the video say that they gained their citizenship in five months or less. In the video, one of the interviewees explained how he obtained Bahraini citizenship for more than 16 of his family members.

Several of the new citizens in the video mentioned that they voted in recent Bahraini election, and one said that he and several of his family members had benefited from free government housing. Housing was a particularly sensitive issue, since many Shi'is said that they had waited for years to be allocated an apartment. This video argued that these

¹⁸⁹ "Political Naturalization in Bahrain," Bahrain Center for Human Rights, WMV video, 8:25, posted by Bahrain Center for Human Rights, June 2002, accessed November 23, 2012, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/467>.

“false citizens,” had no right to citizenship, but had more rights and better representation than they did.

Importantly, the argument that only indigenous people had a right to citizenship was not unique to the Bahraini Shi’is and was not purely based on sect. In the rest of the Gulf, citizenship was based on ancestry and tribal heritage and there was no way to gain citizenship other than being born into it. The argument that the government and supporters made that they can grant citizenship to people who were born foreign runs counter to the conventional wisdom.

Another group which opposition writers considered to have gained citizenship unfairly was Pakistanis who were granted citizenship because of their service in the security forces.¹⁹⁰ To the opposition, the idea of earning citizenship by oppressing true citizens was tragically ironic. These Pakistanis were often described as mercenaries, emphasizing the lack of loyalty and commitment to the state.¹⁹¹ One writer noted that the growth rate of the expatriate population is more than double of the growth rate of citizens,

¹⁹⁰ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, "Political Naturalization in Bahrain: Various Violations of Citizens and Foreign Workers Rights," Bahrain Center for Human Rights, last modified September 2006, accessed November 23, 2012, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/ref06090302>.

¹⁹¹ February 14 Youth Coalition, "February 14 Youth Coalition Final Warning to the Mercenaries Hired by Al-Khalifa Regime," news release, January 27, 2012, accessed March 23, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/notes/%D8%A5%D8%A6%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-14-%D9%81%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%B1/february-14-youth-coalition-final-warning-to-the-mercenaries-hired-by-al-khalifa/314961681888203>.

and said that the demographic imbalance of Bahrain, was “an attack on the rights of citizens.”¹⁹²

Furthermore, the threats and slogans quoted in the Human Rights Watch report on the March 13 and 14 violence indicated that rioters were targeting Pakistanis due to their association with the security forces.¹⁹³ An article on the *Voice of Bahrain* website denounced another group seen as pro-government: journalists writing for official newspapers. The author described them as “media mercenaries” and noted that their profession gives them the perfect opportunity to spy on Shi’is.¹⁹⁴ The editorial writer mentioned the names of specific journalists. An article in al-Wasat worried about the increasing numbers of expatriate doctors employed in Bahrain’s medical service, a profession which the author said, used to be reserved for citizens. The author also expressed concern that Bahrainis were dependent on foreigners in such a vital aspect of daily life.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Omar al-Shehabi, "New Cities in the Arabian Gulf and the 'Demographic Imbalance,'" *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), October 17, 2012, accessed March 19, 2014, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3693/news/read/709398/1/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A8.html>.

¹⁹³ Human Rights Watch, *For a Better Life*, (Publication) (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2012), 104, accessed November 23, 2012, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2012/10/01/better-life-2>. 102-105.

¹⁹⁴ Voice of Bahrain “Naturalization of Media Mercenaries in Bahrain,” *Voice of Bahrain*, September 20, 2012, <http://www.vob.org/ar/index.php?show=news&action=article&id=3759>.

¹⁹⁵ Suhyla Asafar, “Foreign Invasion of Private Hospitals and Occupation Medical Jobs,” Editorial. *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), October 15, 2012, accessed November 23, 2012, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3691/news/read/708937/1.html>.

Another thing that provoked outrage, particularly on social media, was Pakistani policemen seen breaking into cars during protests or looting stores.¹⁹⁶ Given the frequent accusations of criminal behavior against the opposition and the harsh sentences handed out for behaviors like protesting, many were outraged by disregard for the law shown by the “guardians of law and order.” Discussion of these incidents was framed as proof that the Pakistanis were mercenaries not interested in concerned with maintaining society. In fact, they disrupted everyday life and contributed to lawlessness.

In the context of the unrest, there were obvious political reasons for opposition members to distrust and resent anyone they saw as pro-government, but much of the resentment of expatriates seemed economically motivated. Nearly every article mentioned how expatriates contributed unemployment by taking the vast majority of private sector jobs, including high skill, high prestige positions. The Bahrain Center for Human Rights presented itself as the champion of expatriate’s rights, but a statement on its website named foreigners as a leading cause of unemployment.¹⁹⁷ In a similar vein, a statement published by al-Wifaq described how naturalized citizens occupied top administrative and political

¹⁹⁶ Marc Owen Jones, "Police Assist in Vandalising and Looting a Supermarket in Bahrain," *Marc Owen Jones* (blog), entry posted April 13, 2012, accessed March 23, 2014, <http://marcowenjones.wordpress.com/2012/04/13/police-assist-in-the-looting-of-a-supermarket-in-bahrain/>.

¹⁹⁷ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, "Political Naturalization in Bahrain: Various Violations of Citizens and Foreign Workers Rights," Bahrain Center for Human Rights, last modified September 2006, accessed November 23, 2012, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/ref06090302>.

posts in many towns and villages.¹⁹⁸ The third writer took the critique further, saying the presence of expatriates marginalized the role of citizens in the economy, and made them completely dependent on government handouts. The author then called for suspension of the huge building projects that brought so many foreigners to the Gulf, “and turn the region into a work camp.”¹⁹⁹ All of these articles demonstrated that the opposition supporters felt that expatriates received economic benefits that could have gone to citizens.

EXPATRIATES AS A CULTURAL THREAT

Several of the articles linked the different classes of expatriate workers. For example, an al-Wasat editorial that began by calling on the government to provide more jobs for citizens, continued by decrying the unreliability and rebelliousness of expatriate housemaids. In fact, many people seem preoccupied by the question of domestic workers. One letter the editor called for the imprisonment and deportation of housemaids who ran away from their sponsors. Another letter suggests that housemaids who run away become prostitutes, thus harming the moral fabric of the country.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Hassan Madhub, “The Friendliness of Bahrain,” Al-Wifaq National Islamic Society, last modified October 8, 2012, accessed November 23, 2012, <http://www.alwefaq.org/index.php?show=news&action=article&id=4969>.

¹⁹⁹ Omar al-Shehabi, “New Cities in the Arabian Gulf and the ‘Demographic Imbalance,’” Al-Wasat (Manama, Bahrain), October 17, 2012, accessed March 19, 2014, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3693/news/read/709398/1/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A8.html>.

²⁰⁰ Abu Mohammed, letter to the editor, Gulf Daily News (Manama, Bahrain), October 18, 2012, accessed November 24, 2012, <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=334647>.

This conflation of all social classes of an ethnic group could also be seen in the example cited at the beginning of this paper. Rioters angered by the oppression of Pakistani and the security forces and expressed their anger by attacking vulnerable Pakistani laborers. Members of the Shi'i opposition seemed to see the Sunni royal family, Sunni expatriate managers, and Sunni expatriate laborers as a monolith. This was vividly demonstrated by the fact that a columnist saw nothing incongruous in discussing the naturalization of foreign soldiers in the same paragraph as the problem of runaway domestic workers. The government's stance as a defender of migrants against extremist violence might contribute to the impression that all of the Sunnis are one united group. Some reports also indicated that expatriate workers participated in pro-government demonstrations, although some expatriates interviewed by the BBC reported that they were forced to attend the demonstrations.²⁰¹

While the government and its allied newspapers took a positive view of expatriates publicly, this did not mean that many of the anxieties and tensions described in the literature do not exist in Bahrain. The frequent letters to the editor of the *Gulf Daily News* about runaway or disobedient housemaids, similar to those discussed in the literature on Kuwait in the Emirates, suggests that tension between citizens employers and foreign workers were

²⁰¹ BBC, "Bangladeshis Complain of Bahrain Rally 'Coercion,'" *BBC*, March 17, 2011, accessed March 23, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-12773696>.

still very much present.²⁰² Another common theme in newspaper coverage was the problem of foreign prostitutes and their foreign patrons. Much of the coverage implied that prostitution was a problem brought to Bahrain by the influx of foreigners.

The existing literature on expatriates in the Gulf describes the fear of cultural “asianization” and a resulting hostility towards expatriates that does not seem to be present in Bahrain’s pro-government media.²⁰³ The conflict between Sunnis and Shiites in Bahrain has glossed over some of the other divisions and then society, at least in the press. The government in the pro-government media regard expatriates as a useful politically inert tool and is a good rhetorical weapon against the opposition and this trumps any discomfort of their foreignness.

Nevertheless, despite their governments praise of the security forces, and its championing of expatriate’s rights the government did not publicize how many members of the security forces were given citizenship. Even for government supporters, granting citizenship to expatriates was controversial.

AL-WIFAQ’S RESPONSE TO CRITICISM

Al-Wifaq was aware of the disconnect between its advocacy for the rights of Shi’is and its protest against expatriates. The issue of the rights and living conditions of expatriate

²⁰² See for example: Jose S, letter to the editor, *Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain), October 24, 2012, accessed November 24, 2012, <http://gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=340186>.

²⁰³ Paul Dresch, "Foreign Matter: The Place of Strangers in Gulf Society," 2006, in *Globalization and the Gulf*, ed. John W. Fox, Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, and Mohammed Al Murtawa (London: Routledge, 2006),

workers rose to prominence again in January 2013 when a fire at construction workers lodgings killed 13 people²⁰⁴ Al-Wifaq issued statements decrying the incident. It argued that the death of expatriate workers were symptomatic of the government's complete disregard for human rights, and it called for more frequent inspections and improved safety standards, but stated flatly that the authorities have no intention of doing anything to improve the situation. The statement also noted that "the vast majority of foreign labor in Bahrain lives in villages in areas where antigovernment protest takes place," so that when the government "exercises collective punishment by blockading" expatriates suffer alongside Bahrainis.²⁰⁵

In one of his sermons, Isa al-Qasim argued that the deaths of Pakistani policeman other expatriates in bombings were due to the fact that their service to the government places them in harm's way. He denounced the bombings as "an outrageous oppression," but undercuts his condemnation, by saying "it is justified only by a dirty political interest that takes no consideration of religion conscience in the national interest."²⁰⁶ In his opinion, the deaths were inevitable given the security situation the government had created.

²⁰⁴ Gulf Daily News, "Fires Kill 26 Bangladeshis in Two Years," Gulf Daily News (Manama, Bahrain), March 1, 2014, accessed March 1, 2014, <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=371632>.

²⁰⁵ Al-Wifaq, "Al-Wifaq SG: The Lie of "Attacking Expats" Has Collapsed," news release, December 23, 2012, accessed December 1, 2013, <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2012/12/23/7291/>.

²⁰⁶ Isa al-Qasim, "Fatwa by Ayatollah Qasim: Terrorism is Forbidden in Islam," news release, January 10, 2014, accessed February 17, 2014, <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2014/01/11/25635/>.

EXPATRIATES IN POLITICS

From the government's perspective, expatriates are a good source of loyal, cheap, Sunni labor for the security forces, although this was rarely mentioned. Research by Barany and others has emphasized that the successes or failures of the 2011 Arab uprisings were largely determined by how loyal security forces might have been to the regime. The importance of these security forces cannot be overemphasized. It is reasonable to assume that both factions within the Royal family agreed on this point, since regardless of the different political views, neither of them wants to be overrun by protesters. The value the Bahraini government places on expatriates for their loyalty during the uprising was a reversal of previous rulers' concerns that expatriates might bring destabilizing political ideas from their home country. This has resulted in the expulsion of thousands of Yemenis, Egyptians and others during the 1950s and 60s. However, after protests in the 1990s, the loyalty of Shi'i Bahrainis was considered so suspect that the government relied on foreigners.

This is particularly fascinating given the discourse around the idea of foreign interference I have already discussed. Even as the government was warning about possible Iranian support for the opposition, it was sponsoring a largely foreign force in its own country. Sunni groups pointed this out when they criticized the government for allowing American forces to be stationed within Bahrain. In their rhetoric, they compared the U.S. forces with the Iranian agents that they believed had also infiltrated the country. The opposition also seized on this contradiction, and used and concluded their arguments by

asserting that the entire Al Khalifa government is foreign, while the only true citizens are the Shi'is.

When they were mentioned and the context and the terms used revealed many things about the issues of Bahraini identity at the heart of the current upheaval. For the opposition, expatriates represented the coercive force of the government, and also symbolized fears that the government was manipulating Bahrain's demographic situation in order to deprive them of the majority that is normally political power. However, newspaper articles showed that expatriates were perceived as being at the root of Bahrain's economic inequality. This sentiment combined with hostility to the security forces to create a powerful resentment, which was likely expressed in the ongoing attacks against expatriates.

It is important to note here, however, that violence against expatriates, particularly Asians, predated the 2011 uprising. They were the target of attacks during the intifada of the 1990's and during labor actions in the 50's and 60's. Much more frequently they have been the victims of violence perpetrated by their employers, so while much of the most recent violence against expatriates was likely motivated by the factors discussed above

they were far from the only incidents of violence against expatriates, and the reasons listed are far from the only reasons.²⁰⁷

But for the government, expatriates also represented a coercive force, one they could rely on not to be caught up in local politics. They also represented an opportunity to improve the country's human rights record in the face of both domestic and international criticism, allowing them to at least partially reclaim the issue of human rights, which the opposition has made synonymous with Shi'i rights.²⁰⁸ The attacks on expatriates, in 2011, and the bombings in 2013 and 2014 provided them with an opportunity to criticize the opposition's disregard for human rights.

This is all the more troubling to Bahrainis, because citizenship in the rest of the Gulf was largely confined to the descendants of people living in the country at the time of independence. The question of citizenship in the Gulf States was linked to issues of tribal lineage, which will be discussed the greater link in the next chapter. Things were never quite that simple for Bahrain, which was a multiethnic multicultural port city long before its independence from Great Britain. Even so, there was a sense among Bahrainis that to be a Bahraini is to be an Arab and to trace lineage back to centuries of residence in the country. Bahrain's Shi'i opposition in particular was not comfortable with the more modern

²⁰⁷ For an in-depth discussion of the treatment of expatriate workers in Bahrain see: Andrew Gardener, *City of Strangers : Gulf Migration and the Indian Community in Bahrain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

²⁰⁸ Justin Gengler, "Ethnic Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2011), 106.

definition of citizenship as something that could be granted or removed by the government. They based their entire argument for political representation on their place as a majority of citizens, so they didn't wish to see the definition of citizen shift.

At the same time, the hostility towards expatriates demonstrated by some Shi'is threatened their monopoly on the issue of human rights, and gave the government away to attack them. The division between the official and unofficial opposition showed in their response to this issue. February 14 and similar groups were openly hostile to the security forces and, by extension all expatriates. Al-Wifaq attempted to retain its "human rights," credentials by showing its support for expatriates and attacking the weak points of the government's own record of defending the rights of laborers.

As previously mentioned, all of this discussion of human rights is the most part intended for an international audience and Bahrain's labor reforms were positively received internationally, while the attacks on expatriates have also received international coverage in the attention of groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Al-Wifaq's coalition also spent considerable effort in defending its treatment of expatriates and accusing the government. February 14 and related groups, on the other hand were blunt about their intention to target "foreign mercenaries." According to their view of the conflict, attacking "foreign mercenaries" was perfectly justified.

The voices missing from all of this discussion were the voices of the expatriates themselves. While people from across Bahrain's political spectrum argued about what

expatriates wanted, needed, and deserved, they were not interested in hearing from the actual expatriates.

The discussion of expatriates of Bahrain was inextricably tangled with inclusion and identity issues in Bahrain. Because of this rhetorical importance, the issue of expatriates was hotly contested by all sides.

Chapter 4. Gulf Arab Identity or Bahraini Identity

In late November 2013, foreign ministers from the five members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman – met in Manama to discuss trade and security issues.²⁰⁹ The main issue on the table was the GCC union, a plan for closer security and economic cooperation among the five nations.

Saudi Arabia had been pursuing union in various forms since the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council in 1991, but the issue was given new urgency in late 2013 when a deal between the five permanent U.N. Security Council members and Iran was initiated as the GCC began to doubt the United States' willingness to defend them against potential Iranian aggression.²¹⁰ At past GCC summits, delegates had emphasized the potential trade and economic benefits of a customs union and a single currency.²¹¹ In 2014, however, the focus was clearly on security.

²⁰⁹ Madawi al-Rasheed, "Oman Rejection of GCC Adds Insult to Injury for Saudi Arabia," *Al Monitor*, December 9, 2013, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/12/oman-rejects-gcc-union-insults-saudi-arabia.html>

²¹⁰ "Stick Together for Security, Saudi Arabia Warns GCC," *The National* (Dubai, UAE), December 9, 2013, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/stick-together-for-security-saudi-arabia-warns-gcc>.

²¹¹ Tyler Huffman, "Gulf countries take steps to achieve monetary unity," *Al-Monitor*, December 29, 2014, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2013/12/gulf-gcc-monetary-union-central-bank.html>.

At the conclusion of the summit, Saudi Arabia's Deputy Foreign Minister Nizar Madani said that the GCC nations "must unite under one political entity to face internal and external challenges...All countries have realized that blind dependence on a foreign power is no longer acceptable. GCC countries must decide their own futures."²¹² Although negotiations for union eventually stalled when Oman's Foreign Minister announced that his country was not interested in a security agreement, the foreign ministers agreed to continue studying the subject.

The rupture of diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Qatar in March 2014 made the realization of the Gulf Union, at least in the short-term, less likely.²¹³ However, Bahrain's Prime Minister and Saudi Arabia's leaders continued to push for a bilateral union between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Al-Wifaq's coalition also continued to warn against the proposed union.

Coverage of the union plan in both the international and Arab press focused on a potential new union between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain because of the already close economic and security cooperation between the two kingdoms and because of the outspoken popular resistance to the plan.

²¹² "Stick Together for Security, Saudi Arabia Warns GCC," *The National* (Dubai, UAE), December 9, 2013, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/stick-together-for-security-saudi-arabia-warns-gcc>.

²¹³ Sami Nader, "What Next for Qatar and the GCC?" *Al Monitor*, March 9, 2014, accessed March 25, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/03/qatar-gcc-ambassador-withdrawal-reassess-role.html>.

The subtext of all these discussions was that the Gulf Cooperation Council states shared not only foreign policy interests, but also a common “Gulf Arab identity.” Proponents of the Gulf Union plan argued that because of the shared heritage and common tribal links of these countries could and should rely on each other. Al-Wifaq’s coalition dismissed the idea of a “Gulf Arab identity” as an excuse for the government to sacrifice Bahrain’s sovereignty for forces to suppress the opposition. The February 14 Youth Coalition saw the Saudi forces that entered Bahrain as part of the Peninsula Shield Force and the Al Khalifa as part of the same Sunni occupation.

The discussion of the union plan provides ideal forum for contesting questions of Bahraini identity and sovereignty, partly because the plan itself is so ill-defined. Bahrain government spokesperson Sameera Rajab has described the proposed Union as like the European Union.²¹⁴ Others, including Bahrain’s Prime Minister, and Saudi Arabia’s Foreign Minister envision a much higher degree of coordination, perhaps a confederation along lines of the United Arab Emirates, and a very strong defensive element including a united GCC military force.²¹⁵ One report suggested that the proposed military force could consist of about 100,000 troops, with Saudi Arabia contributing 50,000.²¹⁶ Many within al-

²¹⁴ Mohammed al-A’ali, “Iranian Threats to Top Agenda,” *Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain), December 24, 2013, <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=344287>

²¹⁵ “GCC Union ‘Crucial for Security,’” *Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain), December 24, 2013.

²¹⁶ Nawaf Obaid, “Saudi Arabia’s Gulf Union Project Includes Military Dimension,” *Al Monitor*, December 29, 2013, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/12/saudi-arabia-military-gulf-union-regional-leadership.html>.

Wifaq's coalition viewed the plan as a Saudi annexation of Bahrain. The uncertainty surrounding the union plan gave each political factions the opportunity to interpret it in a way that served their rhetorical purposes.

Saudi Arabia would certainly be the most powerful player in any union. Its economy made up more than 45 percent of the total economy of the Gulf Cooperation Council.²¹⁷ It was also the largest of the GCC States post by geographic size and population. It also had the largest oil reserves of any of the GCC States. Saudi Arabia was the main force behind the idea from the beginning and was mainly responsible for drawing up the plans.

Bahrain's Prime Minister was particularly vehement in pushing the GCC Union plan, arguing "A united Gulf would enable its people to live in security, peace and prosperity."²¹⁸ After the inconclusive end to the conference, he outlined his concerns even more explicitly, saying "a GCC union is vital to face security threats and political challenges...What we want is a union that would move us forward to integration and interdependence and provide us with a collective security umbrella."²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Nawaf Obaid, "Saudi Arabia's Gulf Union Project Includes Military Dimension," Al Monitor, December 29, 2013, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/12/saudi-arabia-military-gulf-union-regional-leadership.html>.

²¹⁸ "GCC Union 'Crucial for Security,'" Gulf Daily News (Manama, Bahrain), December 24, 2013. <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=344306>

²¹⁹ "GCC Union 'Crucial for Security,'" Gulf Daily News (Manama, Bahrain), December 24, 2013. <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=344306>

It was clear that the Bahraini government was most implicit in developing closer coordination with Saudi Arabia, because after Oman rejected the idea of defense coordination, Sameera Rajab pointedly noted that union could continue without Oman, and “even with only two countries.”²²⁰

GULF ARAB IDENTITY, NEO-TRADITIONALISM, AND NATIONALISM

Although the Prime Minister argued for union in practical terms, others within the government presented union as the natural result of the ethnic and cultural ties between the GCC countries. Bahrain’s ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Shaikh Humoud bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, described Bahrain and Saudi Arabia as “part of one harmonious family.”²²¹ Columnists in the pro-government *Akhbar al-Khalij* newspaper also presented the idea of a Gulf Arab identity as an alternative to the Bahraini nationalism espoused by al-Wifaq.²²² In his speech during the Manama Summit, King Hamad described the Gulf Union as a means to strengthen the region’s “Islamic identity,” a concept that seems remarkably similar to the Gulf Arab identity. The speech also mentioned the Gulf nation’s “common heritage” The anti-opposition civil society group Citizens for Bahrain outlined the basis for a Gulf Arab identity. “Family and tribal links are extended across national boundaries as a

²²⁰ Mohammed al-A'ali, "Iranian Threats to Top Agenda," *Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain), December 24, 2013, <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=344287>

²²¹ "Gulf Union is a GCC Key Goal since its Inception, Says Bahrain Ambassador to KSA," *Bahrain News Agency*, December 26, 2013, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://bna.bh/portal/en/news/595017>.

²²² Mohammed al-Mahmid, "GCC Union and Survival," editorial, *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Bahrain), January 3, 2014, accessed March 3, 2014, http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/13046/article_touch/61073.html.

result of close historic links across this region. The union project recognizes and celebrates this and helps forge a greater sense of collective Gulf citizenship.”²²³

A presentation by the UAE Identity Authority argued that the main goal of the GCC was to “reconstruct identity, principle of single culture and nation [sic],” and to “strengthen the collective sense of uniqueness.”²²⁴ It went on to call for governments to work for maintaining this identity. This implied that Gulf Arab identity not only existed now, but had always existed.

Contesting this view, Miriam Cooke described the development of a “tribal modern” identity of the Gulf States in the last 30 years.²²⁵ In her view, this identity was a brand that invoked tribal heritage to link the modern Gulf States with their tribal origins and with each other. Cooke noted that heritage projects and the Gulf States focused on reconstructing certain aspects of the Bedouin culture. Since Bedouin tribes ranged across most of what are now the Gulf States, this reimagined Bedouin culture was seen as a single

²²³ Citizens for Bahrain, letter to the editor, *Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain), December 16, 2013, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=366907>.

²²⁴ UAE Identity Authority, "The Question of Identity in GCC Countries" (paper presented at The 21st-Century Gulf: The Challenge of Identity, University Of Exeter, Exeter, UK, June 30, 2010), accessed March 23, 2014, <http://www.slideshare.net/alkhouri/the-question-of-identity-in-gcc-countries-17227264>.

²²⁵ Miriam Cooke, *Tribal Modern: Branding New Nations in the Arab Gulf* (Davis, CA: University of California Press, 2014) 142-3

Gulf Arab identity. Naturally, selecting this tradition and instituting it as the “heritage” of the Gulf States, glossed over the many cultural differences of the Gulf.²²⁶

There were close family ties between all of the ruling families of the Gulf, and many of Bahrain’s other Sunnis have links with Saudi Arabia or Qatar. However, the construction of a Gulf Arab identity on the basis of ethnic ties ignored the fact that Bahrain’s Shi’is, as well as the Sunnis of Iranian origin who make up 10 percent of the Sunni population, are ethnically distinct.²²⁷

Many members of Bahrain’s Royal family highlighted their family ties with Saudi Arabia. King Hamad’s second wife was a Saudi princess and several of his sons married into the Saudi royal family.²²⁸ His youngest son, Prince Nasser also routinely dressed in Saudi, rather than Bahraini traditional dress. This was significant because traditional dress was one of the most important and obvious aspects of the “tribal modern.”²²⁹ Essentially, when members of the royal family talked about Gulf Arab identity, they were talking about

²²⁶ Miriam Cooke, *Tribal Modern: Branding New Nations in the Arab Gulf* (Davis, CA: University of California Press, 2014) 65-7

²²⁷ Neil Patrick, "Nationalism in the Gulf States," in *The Transformation of the Gulf: Politics, Economics and the Global Order*, ed. David Held and Kristian Ulrichsen (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012)

²²⁸ Fuad I. Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980),

²²⁹ Miriam Cooke, *Tribal Modern: Branding New Nations in the Arab Gulf* (Davis, CA: University of California Press, 2014) 127-30

the identity they themselves embodied. The Bahraini royal family and their close tribal allies were the only people in Bahrain who had a tribal heritage.

In light of this controversy and contestation, King Hamad's statement in a February 2012 speech that, "we all came from Zubara together" prompted a strong reaction.²³⁰ Zubara was a city in what is now Qatar that the Al Khalifa ruled before they invaded Bahrain. This attempt to smooth over the division in Bahraini society by reinventing history so that "we all came from Zubara together," prompted a scornful response, including a satirical video.²³¹ The video showed interviews with Bahraini citizens of Indian or Pakistani origin to emphasize the impossibility of grouping all Bahrainis together in the same category with the Al Khalifa. The attempt to connect all Bahrainis together with the identity of the Royal family contrasts sharply with the Shi'i opposition groups' definition of a true Bahraini citizen. February 14 and groups like it trace their legitimacy back to the Shi'i society that was in Bahrain before the Al Khalifa invasion. This disconnect was an indicator of the divisions that prevent a political solution.

The moderate faction family remained largely silent on the issue of union. It was generally regarded as less pro-Saudi than the hardline faction and less invested in the

²³⁰ Al-Ayam, "King: Western media oppression of Shiites in Bahrain, as if they were All against Their Nation," Al-Ayam (Bahrain), February 29, 2012, accessed November 24, 2013, http://www.alayam.com/News/online/online_local/50662.

²³¹ "b876_w_2.3.gp," Religion and Politics in Bahrain, WMA video, 2:46, posted February 26, 2012, accessed March 25, 2014, <http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2012/02/when-no-one-is-happy.html>.

question of Iranian aggression, and did not support security measures a solution to the domestic unrest problem.

TNGOU supported the union plan in many of its statements, and it organized a pro-union demonstration during the recent GCC summit to counter an opposition antiunion protest. In fact, its support for the plan is part of TNGOU's manifesto.²³² It described union with Saudi Arabia as one of Bahrain's best defenses against both Iran and "terrorism," and it cited the intervention of the Peninsula Shield Force as an example of the benefits of close defense cooperation. The Sunni al-Asala and al-Minbar political societies, which often joined TNGOU in criticizing the Shi'is were largely silent on the question of Gulf union. The small size of the pro-union protest suggested that many of TNGOU's supporters and allies were not interested in the union question.²³³

The cultural arguments made by supporters of the Gulf union raised further questions, since Bahrain, and the Gulf as a whole was home to many different cultures. Recent studies of cultural revivalism in Saudi Arabia and the UAE have noted that the museums and cultural events portray the Bedouin culture is the only form of traditional

²³² National Gathering of Unity, "Goals of the Gathering," Altajama3, accessed October 15, 2013, <http://altajam3.org/portal/arabic/%D8%A3%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%91%D8%B9>.

²³³ One analyst attributes the small turnout of this protest to a recent split between TGNOU and its more socially conservative allies over minister of culture Sheikha Mai's cultural initiatives which members of al-Asalah and some unnamed "citizens of Muharraq" considered too liberal. This led to some violent protests, and TGNOU sided with the minister.

Gulf culture.²³⁴ The UAE in particular promoted newly created “traditional” events such as camel racing and televised Nabati poetry competitions.²³⁵ Although the Al Khalifa came from a Bedouin background, originating in the Najaf region of Saudi Arabia, this nomadic culture was never prominent in Bahrain, where society was traditionally based on agriculture, fishing, and trade.²³⁶ Therefore, the conception of the Gulf Arab identity implicitly excluded Bahrain Shi’i population, which lacked both the ethnic and cultural ties that are privileged by the idea of Gulf Arabs as a community.²³⁷

The royal families of the Gulf States come from similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds and comprise this identity, which was being put forward as a Gulf identity. This emphasis on common heritage and identity caused some online commenters to question whether a GCC union would put Bahrain and the other Gulf states under the authority of Saudi Arabian law, which is stricter particularly on social issues than the laws and the rest of the Gulf. However, Saudi Arabia repeatedly insisted that union would not lead Saudi Arabia to interfere in any of its neighbors domestic affairs.²³⁸ An al-Wasat

²³⁴ Neil Patrick, "Nationalism in the Gulf States," in *The Transformation of the Gulf: Politics, Economics and the Global Order*, ed. David Held and Kristian Ulrichsen (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 56-57

²³⁵ Miriam Cooke, *Tribal Modern: Branding New Nations in the Arab Gulf* (Davis, CA: University of California Press, 2014),

²³⁶ Nelida Fuccaro, *Histories of City of State in the Persian Gulf: Manama since 1800* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 17-9, EPUB.

²³⁷ Is important to note here that the other Gulf States were also heterogeneous and consisted of different ethnic and cultural groups.

²³⁸ "Stick Together for Security, Saudi Arabia Warns GCC," *The National* (Dubai, UAE), December 9, 2013, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/stick-together-for-security-saudi-arabia-warns-gcc>.

article cast scorn on the idea of a Gulf Arab identity noting that Bahrain is home to many different cultures, including some non-Arab ones.²³⁹ A column for the al-Wasat newspaper wondered how anyone could form a political framework that would link the constitutional monarchies of Kuwait in Bahrain with the more conservative monarchies of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman. The columnists feared that the more liberal states would be forced to become more conservative and in the overwhelming influence of Saudi Arabia.²⁴⁰

These concerns highlighted the cultural differences between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Many Bahrainis pride themselves on their modernism and development as well as their multicultural heritage especially in contrast with their neighbors. This laid-back image also proved very profitable for Bahrain as it is a destination for Saudi and Western businessmen looking to relax.²⁴¹

The Gulf Union plan was also proposed as an alternative to foreign interference, both by providing Bahrain with a shield against Iran and by freeing Bahrain from its dependence on US military support. Unsurprisingly, opposition groups and others who

²³⁹ Jamil al-Mahari, "Cooperation Council and the Shift of the Union," Al-Wasat (Manama, Bahrain), December 13, 2013, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/4115/news/read/837631/1.html>.

²⁴⁰ Hani al-Fardan, "Gulf's Differences Are Not a Secret," Al-Wasat (Manama, Bahrain), December 9, 2013, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/4111/news/read/836359/1.html>.

²⁴¹ Justin Gengler believed that Bahrain is primarily valuable view Saudi Arabia as his basic committed transgression where citizens can escape for time from the more restrictions of their own country, unless release the pressure without having to allow the transgressions of the borders of Saudi Arabia. He also notes that many Saudi businessmen meet with their Western contacts in Bahrain rather than in the kingdom.

disapproved of the involvement of the Peninsula Shield Force in the suppression of the 2011 protests argued that joining a GCC union would replace the threat of Iranian interference with the certainty of Saudi interference.

THE OPPOSITION, BAHRAINI NATIONALISM, AND GULF UNION

It is not surprising that al-Wifaq's coalition and February 14 were opposed to the Gulf Union plan, particularly since it viewed Saudi Arabia as allied with the royal family against them. It assumed that the projected Gulf Union Army would be deployed against them, just as the Peninsula Shield Force was used to clear the Pearl Roundabout. Many within the opposition also viewed the effort as an attempt by Saudi Arabia to annex Bahrain and the royal family's push for the union as an attempt to drown Bahrain Shi'i majority in the Sunni population of Saudi Arabia. Al-Wifaq's statements referred to the union plan as a "bilateral union," that is, a union between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, regarding the other Gulf States as insignificant.

Al-Wifaq's coalition's argument against the union focused on Bahrain's sovereignty. A statement by al-Wifaq noted that Bahrain gained its sovereignty in 1971 after a popular referendum under the auspices of the United Nations, and that the royal family was attempting to relinquish their sovereignty without consulting the citizens. "The people -not Khalifa's [sic] gained the independence and it is only the people of Bahrain who has the right to talk about independence, and no one has the right even Al Khalifas- to speak on behalf of the Bahraini people about any kind of confederation with any

country.”²⁴² Al-Wifaq’s Secretary-General Ali Salman called for a popular referendum on GCC union, presumably confident that the referendum would reject it.

During the December 2014 Manama Summit, al-Wifaq and its allies organized protests attended by at least 10,000 people.²⁴³ One statement argued that this protests was the equivalent of a popular referendum and shows that the people were against the idea. Another statement noted that there was opposition to the Gulf Union plan in many of Bahrain’s neighbors. “We are rejecting this union for the same reasons the Omanis, Qataris, Kuwaitis and Emiratis are rejecting it.”²⁴⁴ the statement argued that each country had its own distinct national identity, and each country wanted its sovereignty.

These arguments were in line with the general Bahraini nationalist tone of al-Wifaq statements, and they were designed to appeal to those who were implicitly excluded from the idea of “Gulf Arab identity,” which implies Sunni faith, Arab ethnicity, and the tribal background. These Bahraini nationalist arguments were likely to find an audience in

²⁴² Al-Wifaq, "All the Forms Planned for the Union Are Merely of 'Wasting the Independence,'" news release, May 14, 2012, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://alWifaq.net/cms/2012/05/14/6469/>.

²⁴³ Al-Wifaq claims there were more than 30,000. Al-Wifaq, "300,000 Bahrainis Protest against the Bilateral Union," news release, May 19, 2012, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://alWifaq.net/cms/2012/05/19/6487/>.

²⁴⁴ Al-Wifaq, "300,000 Bahrainis Protest against the Bilateral Union," news release, May 19, 2012, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://alWifaq.net/cms/2012/05/19/6487/>.

Bahrain, since the citizens demonstrated their independence when they rejected the idea of becoming one of the United Arab Emirates or Iran in its 1971 popular referendum.²⁴⁵

The 1971 referendum was an important symbol for al-Wifaq's coalition because it was one of the few occasions of cross-sectarian Bahraini unity. It demonstrated that citizens saw themselves as Bahrainis, rather than Iranians or Emiratis. Al-Wifaq argued for a Bahraini nationalist identity, but this was one of the few events in Bahraini history that had the same symbolic importance for both sects. Another important event for Bahraini nationalist identity was the approval of the National Action Charter in 2001. Both of these events were important points of reference for al-Wifaq's coalition, and were frequently mentioned in their statements. Al-Wifaq's coalition also considered the beginning of the uprising at the Pearl Roundabout as a manifestation of Bahraini nationalism. Furthermore, the al-Wifaq's arguments implied that the royal family's willingness and eagerness to relinquish Bahrain's sovereignty, for the sake of security and power, demonstrated the need for political reform.

If al-Wifaq's coalition was concerned by the potential defense cooperation that the new plan implies, they are skeptical of its proposed economic benefits. The *al-Wasat* newspaper notes that after the formation of the Gulf Cooperative Council the standard of living of Bahrainis, particularly the Shi'is, decreased, and questioned whether the Shi'is

²⁴⁵ Fuad I. Khuri, *Tribes and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980),

would benefit from any of the potential economic opportunities.²⁴⁶ One article also noted that although the Gulf Union plan has been under consideration for almost 15 years, very little progress had been made.²⁴⁷ Sarcastically, the author asked whether a government that could leave citizens stranded for decades on the waiting list for government housing could organize something as massive as a transnational union. He concluded that the idea of a Gulf Union was unrealistic given the lack of progress on the GCC's other coordination projects, but that many of its supporters were still fighting for it

Another columnist argued that the foreign policy interests of the Gulf States were far too divergent to make a union successful.²⁴⁸ He noted that both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have concerns about Iranian expansionism, while their neighbors are far less concerned with it. He concluded that a Saudi Arabia-Bahrain union was possible but that a larger union was unlikely.²⁴⁹ A final opinion piece argued that the proposed union was just a cloak for Saudi expansionist plans.²⁵⁰ The author said that Saudi Arabia revealed its lack

²⁴⁶ Yusuf Maki, "Gulf Union: Guarantee for the Future," *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), December 20, 1963, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/4122/news/read/839635/1.html>.

²⁴⁷ Hani al-Fardan, "Gulf's Differences Are Not a Secret," *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), December 9, 2013, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/4111/news/read/836359/1.html>.

²⁴⁸ Hani al-Fardan, "Gulf's Differences Are Not a Secret," *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), December 9, 2013, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/4111/news/read/836359/1.html>.

²⁴⁹ Hani al-Fardan, "Gulf's Differences Are Not a Secret," *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), December 9, 2013, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/4111/news/read/836359/1.html>.

²⁵⁰ Jamil al-Mahari, "Cooperation Council and the Shift of the Union," *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), December 13, 2013, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/4115/news/read/837631/1.html>.

of true “Gulf Arab brotherly” sentiments by “waging war against the Sultanate of Oman” because of Oman’s opposition to the union plan.

Many of these articles suggested that whatever ties bound the Gulf states together they were not strong enough to overcome their social, cultural, and political differences. They were also not strong enough to overcome government incompetence. These articles assumed that the union would not be successful. Other articles that view the entire process of a Saudi Arabia in expansionist plot thought that the effort might succeed. While Gulf Arab identity was too weak to form the basis of a union, these writers assumed that Saudi Arabia’s ambition was nearly all-powerful.

Statements and social media postings issued by the February 14 Youth Coalition largely ignored the entire issue of Gulf Union. However, February 14 denounced the royal family for inviting the GCC’s Peninsula Shield Force into Bahrain to put down the uprising. They described this as the “Saudi occupation” and announced their intention to resist it.²⁵¹

GULF UNION AND SOVEREIGNTY

Regardless of the feasibility of the plan, the discussions of a GCC union provided the royal family, their supporters, and the opposition the opportunity to express their views on the nature of Bahraini, sovereignty and identity. In general it seems that Bahrainis,

²⁵¹ See, for example: February 14 Youth Coalition, Who are the Terrorists? photograph, Facebook, accessed March 25, 2014, <http://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/image06.jpg?w=300&h=300>. See also: February 14 Youth Coalition, Revolution of Minarets, image, Facebook, October 27, 2013, accessed March 4, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/Coalition14th?hc_location=timeline.

whether they have pro-government or opposition sympathies assumed that any possible union would be a close and that political and military organization more along the lines of the United Arab Emirates and the European Union. Their support or opposition to the plan is largely determined by whether they consider Iran a serious threat to Bahrain. This, in turn, was determined by whether they consider Iran to be behind Bahrain's domestic unrest. Many, if not most, government supporters appeared to believe this. Therefore, they saw stopping Iranian interference as Bahrain's number one priority and relinquishing some of Bahrain's sovereignty was a small price to pay for security. Importantly, the vast majority of government supporters were Sunni Arabs who would have close ethnic and cultural ties with Riyadh, and were more likely to see themselves as having a Gulf Arab identity.

Those who believed that Bahrain's domestic protest movement was a legitimate expression of popular will viewed Saudi Arabia as the enemy, brought in by an illegitimate government to suppress its own people. Anyone who held this view was likely to regard the Iranian threat as overblown, if not completely imaginary, and to view Saudi Arabia as Bahrain's real enemy. On this basis, the Shi'i opposition strenuously resisted union. The issue of Saudi Arabia's relationship with Bahrain and Iran's relationship with Bahrain went directly to the heart of the conflict between the government and its supporters and the opposition.

None of the political groups seemed to consider the union likely to succeed. Attempts to institute a customs union in a single currency had made no progress at the time of writing. Even if the current diplomatic breaches were healed, political union of along

the lines of that outlined by Bahraini Prime Minister would be far more complex and contentious.

Nevertheless, the issues brought to the surface by the discussion of union remain. Even the currently the independent Bahrain is dependent on Saudi Arabia's economic subsidies, and in the current crisis it has also been dependent on Saudi Arabia for troops to suppress the uprising. As long as Bahrainis had the royal family Saudi Arabia's support, it was almost certain to remain in power, since the Saudis had the resources to prop them up them indefinitely, but by the same token the more Bahrain relied on Saudi support the more they become dependent on their neighbor for the last real power they had. Given the close ties between the royal houses, this shift might not have seemed momentous to the Al Khalifa. To many Bahrainis, however, it seemed that the royal family was "wasting" Bahrain's independence.²⁵²

The government supported the concept of Gulf Arab identity as an alternative to the opposition's varying conceptions of Bahraini identity. The Gulf Arab identity was based on a reimagining of Bedouin tradition, and the royal family and their closest tribal allies came from this tradition. Therefore, the royal family was suggesting that its own identity represent a new kind of Bahraini identity. The Shi'i opposition, both al-Wifaq's

²⁵² Al-Wifaq, "All the Forms Planned for the Union Are Merely of 'Wasting the Independence,'" news release, May 14, 2012, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2012/05/14/6469/>.

coalition and the February 14 Youth Coalition regarded this as a betrayal of “true” Bahraini identity.

Conclusion

All of the groups I studied for this project would have considered themselves to Bahraini nationalists, but they each had a different conception of what it meant to be Bahraini. The discourse on this issue of Bahraini identity has coalesced around four different issues: national dialogue, terrorism, expatriates, and the GCC union. The different ways that groups within the royal family, the Shi'i opposition, and Sunni groups conceived of these issues, divided them.

The moderate opposition coalition, led by al-Wifaq, argued that members all religious sects were equally citizens of Bahrain and that the citizens were equal with the royal family. Although al-Wifaq often criticized the government, it never explicitly argued it was illegitimate. Therefore, al-Wifaq staked its reputation on a political solution through the national dialogue. The national dialogue was also supported by a moderate faction within the royal family. This faction, led by Crown Prince Salman, admitted that at least some members of the opposition were “true citizens” with real concerns. Therefore, the national dialogue with the opposition made sense to them.

In the view of the royal family's conservative faction, however, the opposition was entirely made up of foreign agents. Therefore, the national dialogue was essentially a “negotiation with terrorists.” The Sunni opposition agreed with this sentiment and felt that since they were the true citizens, having demonstrated their loyalty by supporting the government during the uprising they should have been the ones who rewarded by the

government. They feared that the national dialogue would result in concessions, the Shi'is being rewarded for the disloyal behavior.

The February 14 Youth Coalition, and groups similar to it in the unofficial opposition, argued that the government was illegitimate and the Shi'i revolutionaries were the "true citizens." For this reason, they were not interested in the negotiations. The hostility that the royal family's conservatives, the Sunni opposition, and the unofficial opposition felt toward the national dialogue proved a major obstacle to its negotiations.

One of the most commonly discussed issues was "terrorism," and this discussion centered on who had the right to use violence. The royal family made it clear that it had a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, and it argued that anyone else who committed an act of violence had to be a foreign agent. Thus, in discussions of the national dialogue, the royal family was divided as to whether there was a legitimate opposition made up of true Bahraini citizens, once the discourse on terrorism started dominate after the Riffa bombing the royal family seemed united in depicting the opposition as a militant foreign-backed terrorist organization. Sunni groups were even harsher in their condemnation of the "terrorist" activity, and demanded that the government stamp it out. February 14 held the opposite view, seeing their members as "true citizens" fighting for their freedom against the Al Khalifas' foreign occupation. Al-Wifaq found itself in a difficult position since it supported the legitimacy of both of these groups. In general, it settled for condemning terrorism in vague terms, pointing out that the government frequently engage in excessive violence.

Throughout the discussions, al-Wifaq maintained the broadest definition of Bahraini citizenship, as part of its effort to gather support. It claimed that both Sunnis and Shi'is were true citizens. At the same time, however, it vigorously opposed the granting of citizenship to expatriates, which it described as “demographic engineering.” Although al-Wifaq said was not hostile to expatriates, it did not believe they could or should become Bahrainis. Like most citizens the Gulf, al-Wifaq's leaders saw expatriates as merely a temporary presence. February 14 was actively hostile to expatriates because it saw them only as the mercenaries of the illegitimate government.

The government and the government supporters saw expatriates as useful tools for suppressing unrest, even arguing that the foreigners could be more loyal than so-called citizens. Nevertheless, it was unwilling to discuss its naturalization policies, and most expatriates had no chance at gaining citizenship.

Identity was most explicitly discussed in the context of the GCC union. Bahrain's Royal family promotes the idea on the grounds of “Gulf Arab identity.” However, the entire Shi'i opposition, al-Wifaq's official coalition and the unofficial opposition denied that Bahrain had a “Gulf Arab identity.” Gulf countries have constructed an identity from their idea of a traditional culture based on the tribal links that unite much of the Gulf. Bahrain's royal family was part of this tribal network, but Bahrain Shi'is were not. For this reason, al-Wifaq described the idea of GCC union as a betrayal of Bahrain's unique identity. It did not want this identity to be swallowed up in the identity of the Gulf as a whole.

While an analysis of political statements revealed these views on identity, it also showed that the sentiments of the various political groups shifted according to political strategy. In general, al-Wifaq emphasized a nationalist secular Bahraini identity rather than a Shi'i identity, but in the discussion of the naturalization of Sunni expatriates or the Gulf Union it highlighted Bahrain's Shi'i character to make its point. Similarly, al-Wifaq promoted the idea of nonviolent protest, but faced with the growing popularity of February 14 it backed the use of violence for self-defense and did not directly criticize February 14's tactics.

Another pressure that influenced the views expressed in these statements was the pressure of international opinion. As nationalist as Bahraini political groups and their platforms were, all of these groups were also keenly aware of international opinion, and they tried to manipulate it. The violence in Bahrain's streets was mainly discussed in the context of terrorism, with an eye to the "global war on terror." When justifying its harsher terrorism laws and its prosecution of "terrorists" Bahrain's government was eager to link them to international terrorist groups. Similarly, opposition groups gained international attention for their discussion of human rights abuses, and Bahrain's government showcased its own progress on rights for expatriate workers and criticized the treatment of expatriates by the opposition. The Sunni opposition also criticized the opposition internationally and it made the case that the Sunnis were the true "democratic opposition" while the Shi'i opposition was a dangerous terrorist group.

Recent political developments in the Gulf have been understudied, but the current heritage revival movements in the UAE and Qatar suggest that many of the Gulf States are dealing with similar questions of national identity. The impact of these national identity issues and political developments deserves study. For Bahrain, a detailed political survey could help determine whether the views expressed in the political statements and newspaper opinion pieces I examined reflected the attitudes of Bahrainis in general. The unrest and uncertainty in Bahrain gives scholars an opportunity to re-examine our assumptions about the Gulf and its politics. I hope that this study contributes to this discussion.

The uprising in Bahrain tends to be discussed in terms of the sectarian divide. While this was clearly a major factor in the definition of Bahraini identity, this study shows that it was not the only factor that defined identity. Sectarianism was not the only factor that divided political groups from one another. In fact, some political groups such as al-Wifaq's coalition attempted to transcend the sectarian issue. Bahrain's political groups were divided by their conception of what it meant to be Bahraini. As each group demanded rights for citizens, they disagreed on conceptualizations of citizenship. Similarly, denying that their opponents were "true citizens," allowed each group to delegitimize views they disagreed with. Looking at Bahrain from purely an issue of sectarianism obscures many of the other divisions that influenced the political situation in profound ways.

Bibliography

- Abaddi, al-Saeed. "Interview with Leader of Bahrain's al-Menbar Society." News release. March 4, 2007. Accessed November 25, 2013. <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=2264>.
- Abdel Hamid, Ramla. "Does the Path Show That the Dialogue Will Succeed?" Editorial. *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 13, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3812/news/read/738737/1.html>.
- Abdo, Geneive. *The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi'a-Sunni Divide*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2013.
- Abdul Qader, Sayyed. "The Beginning of the End of the Dialogue: The Opposition Refuses to Condemn the Violence and Iranian Interference." Editorial. *Akhbar al-Khalij*, February 21, 2013. Accessed March 12, 2013. <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12753/article/8941.html>.
- Abdulrahman, Anwar. "Has It Come to This?" Editorial. *Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain), February 3, 2013. Accessed March 1, 2014. <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=346798>.
- "About al-Ayam." Al-Ayam. Last modified 2013. Accessed November 25, 2013. <http://www.alayam.com/AboutAlayam>.
- Akhbar al-Khalij. "Interior Minister Speaks to Citizens: Terrorist Cell Leader Details Will Be Announced Soon." *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Bahrain), February 17, 2013. Accessed March 11, 2013. <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12749/article/8312.html>.
- Al-A'ali, Mohamed. "Worshippers Target of Car Blast at Mosque." *Gulf Daily News*. Accessed February 16, 2014. <http://www.gulfdailynewsonline.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=35772>.
- Al-A'ali, Mohammed. "Diplomat 'Leading War on Bahrain.'" *Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain), April 10, 2013. Accessed November 29, 2013. <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=351120>.
- . "Iranian Threats to Top Agenda." *Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain), December 24, 2013.

- Al-Akhbar. "Bahrain Says Iran, Hezbollah Behind 'Terror Cell.'" *Al-Akhbar English* (Beirut, Lebanon), February 20, 2013. Accessed November 29, 2013. <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/15024>.
- Al-Ayam* (Bahrain). "King: Western Media Oppression of Shi'is in Bahrain, as If They Were All against Their Nation." February 29, 2012. Accessed November 24, 2013. http://www.alayam.com/News/online/online_local/50662.
- Al-Batakhilil, Yusuf. "Away from the Dialogue and into the Lion's Den." Editorial. *Al-Watan* (Manama, Bahrain), February 10, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://www.alwatannews.net>.
- . "Guarantees for the National Dialogue...Where is the Trust?" Editorial. *Al-Watan* (Manama, Bahrain), February 11, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://www.alwatannews.net>.
- . "Winners and Losers in the Dialogue." Editorial. *Al-Watan* (Manama, Bahrain), February 10, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://www.alwatannews.net>.
- Al-Bina', Intisar. "Wefaq and Recent Failure of the Russian Well." Editorial. *Al-Watan* (Bahrain). <http://www.alwatannews.net>.
- Al-Fardan, Hani. "Gulf's Differences Are Not a Secret." *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), December 9, 2013. Accessed March 4, 2014. <http://www.alwasatnews.com/4111/news/read/836359/1.html>.
- . "Playing with the Meaning of Consensus." Editorial. *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 11, 2013. <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3810/news/read/738191/1.html>.
- Al-Fateh Youth Coalition. "Manifesto: Al-Fateh Youth Coalition." News release. June 30, 2013. Accessed February 17, 2014. <http://alfateh21february.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/fycmanifesto.pdf>.
- Al-Jamri, Mansour. "Healing the Nation." Editorial. *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 16, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3815/news/read/739481/1.html>.
- Al-Jazeera* (Doha, Qatar). "Bahrain Boosts Penalties for 'Terror Acts.'" August 1, 2013. Accessed March 23, 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/08/2013829552575479.html>.

- Al-Khawaja, Maryam. Twitter post. October 2, 2013.
<https://twitter.com/MARYAMALKHAWAJA>.
- Al-Mahamid, Mohammed. "Al-Qasim and the Bab Al-Khruj Sermon." Editorial. *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain), February 10, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013.
<http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12742/article/7042.html>.
- Al-Mahari, Jamil. "Cooperation Council and the Shift of the Union." *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), December 13, 2013. Accessed March 4, 2014.
<http://www.alwasatnews.com/4115/news/read/837631/1.html>.
- Al-Mahmid, Mohammed. "GCC Union and Survival." Editorial. *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Bahrain), January 3, 2014. Accessed March 3, 2014. http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/13046/article_touch/61073.html.
- Al-Musawi, Mohammed. "What Is the February 14 Coalition?" *Manama Voice* (Manama, Bahrain), September 8, 2011. Accessed October 21, 2013.
http://manamavoice.com/news-news_read-7292-0.html.
- Al-Rasheed, Madawi. "Oman Rejection of GCC Adds Insult to Injury for Saudi Arabia." *Al Monitor*, December 9, 2013. Accessed March 3, 2014. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/12/oman-rejects-gcc-union-insults-saudi-arabia.html>.
- Al-Shehabi, Omar. "Demography and Bahrain's Unrest." *Sada*, March 16, 2011. Accessed November 23, 2013.
<http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/03/16/demography-and-bahrain-s-unrest/6b7y>.
- . "New Cities in the Arabian Gulf and the 'Demographic Imbalance.'" *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), October 17, 2012. Accessed October 17, 2012.
<http://www.alwasatnews.com/3693/news/read/709398/1/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A8.html>.
- Al-Sheroogi, Maryam. "Between the Opposition and the Authorities." Editorial. *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 10, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013.
<http://www.alwasatnews.com/3809/news/read/737864/1.html>.
- . "Head to Head." Editorial. *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 12, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013.
<http://www.alwasatnews.com/3811/news/read/738494/1.html>.

- . "Where Are the Rights of Citizens, LMRA?" *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), October 21, 2012. Accessed November 23, 2012.
<http://www.alwasatnews.com/3697/news/read/710334/1.html>.
- Al-Watan. "About Us." *Al-Watan*. Accessed December 5, 2013.
<http://alwatannews.net/Opinions.aspx>.
- Al-Wifaq. "All the Forms Planned for the Union Are Merely of 'Wasting the Independence.'" News release. May 14, 2012. Accessed March 4, 2014.
<http://alwefaq.net/cms/2012/05/14/6469/>.
- . "Al Musawi: The Old Story of Terror Cells is Boring." News release. March 2, 2013. Accessed February 22, 2014. <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/03/02/7594/>.
- . "Al-Wefaq: Findings of BICI Confirm the Nationalistic Nature of Bahraini Revolution." News release. November 24, 2011. Accessed December 1, 2013.
<http://alwefaq.net/cms/2011/11/24/6026/>.
- . "Al-Wefaq: No Social Contract and Constitution in Bahrain Since 1975." News release. August 28, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013.
<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&ved=0OCDEQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Falwefaq.net%2Fcms%2F2013%2F08%2F28%2F22358%2F&ei=3ZBkUvH5BsrY2QXe-4GYAQ&usq=AFQjCNFvzWyZ3-PSOF-qZfqhUXullTT94w&sig2=a1aVyso9feO8dI20KQOipw&bvm=bv.54934254,d.b2I>.
- . "Al Wefaq: Official Measures Reflect Flounder and Absence of Nationalism." News release. March 27, 2013. Accessed April 29, 2013.
<http://alwefaq.net/index.php?show=news&action=article&id=7740>.
- . "Al-Wefaq SG: The Lie of "Attacking Expats" Has Collapsed." News release. December 23, 2012. Accessed December 1, 2013.
<http://alwefaq.net/cms/2012/12/23/7291/>.
- . "Manama Document." News release. October 12, 2011. Accessed October 5, 2013. <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2011/10/12/5934/>.
- . "Opposition Parties: Two Years of Terror Have Failed to Undermine the Demand for Democracy." News release. March 13, 2013. Accessed March 18, 2014. <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/03/16/18401/>.

- . "Statement Issued by the Prominent Clerics in Bahrain on the Degrading Treatment of Rayhana al-Musawi." News release. July 14, 2013. Accessed February 22, 2014. <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/07/14/21376/>.
- . "Statement on the National Dialogue." News release. March 6, 2013. Accessed November 23, 2013. <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/03/06/7624/>.
- . "Summary of a Statement by Al Wefaq National Islamic Society Secretary General 'Ali Salman about Recent Development in Bahrain's Political Arena." News release. August 19, 2013. Accessed November 29, 2013. http://alwefaq.net/index_lite.php?show=news&action..
- . "300,000 Bahrainis Protest against the Bilateral Union." News release. May 19, 2012. Accessed March 4, 2014. <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2012/05/19/6487/>.
- . Twitter post. January 23, 2012, 12:31. <https://twitter.com/ALWEFAQ/status/161365445599952896>.
- . "Wefaq SG: Our Priority is National Solution, Gov is Pushing the Country to a Regional Battlefield." News release. November 29, 2013. Accessed December 1, 2013. <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/11/29/24570/>.
- Al-Zaidi, Hisham. "Strikes and the Return of Teams." Editorial. *Al-Watan* (Bahrain), February 12, 2013. Accessed November 29, 2013. <http://www.alwatannews.net>.
- Amnesty International. "Bahrain Must Urgently Reinstate Nationality of 31 Opposition Figures." News release. November 5, 2013. Accessed December 5, 2013. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/bahrain-must-urgently-reinstate-nationality-31-opposition-figures-2013-11-05>.
- 'Aoud, Taji. "Bahrain's National Dialogue ..Ask the Old Hand." *Al-Ayam* (Bahrain), February 13, 2013. Accessed November 29, 2013. <http://www.alayam.com/writers/7011>.
- Asafar, Suhyla. "Foreign Invasion of Private Hospitals and Occupation Medical Jobs." Editorial. *Al-Wasat* (Mnana, Bahrain), October 15, 2012. Accessed November 23, 2012. <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3691/news/read/708937/1.html>.
- . "New Cities in the Arabian Gulf and the 'Demographic Imbalance.'" Editorial. *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), November 5, 2012. Accessed March 25, 2014.

"b876_w_2.3.gp." Religion and Politics in Bahrain. WMA video, 2:46. Posted February 26, 2012. Accessed March 25, 2014.
<http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2012/02/when-no-one-is-happy.html>.

Bahrain Center for Human Rights. "Grave allegations of a hate-attack against a migrant worker confirms BCHR's worries in the aftermath of illegal naturalization." Bahrain Center for Human Rights. Accessed November 23, 2012.
<http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/629>.

———. "Political Naturalization in Bahrain: Various Violations of Citizens and Foreign Workers Rights." Bahrain Center for Human Rights. Last modified September 2006. Accessed November 23, 2012.
<http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/ref06090302>.

Bahrain First. Twitter post. February 19, 2014, 6:20 p.m.
<https://twitter.com/BahrainFist/status/436143144837873664>.

"Bahraini Film: Coming." Youtube. Video file, 3:30. Posted by Media Center of the Revolution in Bahrain, February 13, 2013. Accessed February 22, 2014.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVJC7eS2Zt4>.

Bahrain Mirror. "On the Principle of Consenting to the Consensus: Transfer of the King's Powers to the Prime Minister." *Bahrain Mirror* (Bahrain), July 28, 2011. Accessed November 25, 2013. <http://www.bahrainmirror.com/news/1520.html>.

Bahrain News Agency. "Safety and security in Bahrain are restored: says BDF Commander - In - Chief Marshal Shaikh Khalifa." May 2, 2011. Accessed April 24, 2013. <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/454979>.

"Bahrain: Report on the Perpetrators of Terrorism and Identification of February 14." Youtube. Video file, 14:27. Posted by Bahrain News Agency, June 12, 2014. Accessed February 16, 2014.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=D_WBKYBXIY0.

Bahrain Watch. "PR Watch: Keeping an Eye on the Kingdom's PR." *Bahrain Watch*. Last modified November 23, 2012. Accessed April 27, 2013.
<http://bahrainwatch.org/pr/>.

Bani Jamrah Voice. Facebook update. September 4, 2012.
<https://www.facebook.com/BaniJamrahVoice>.

- Bassiouni, Mahmoud Cherif, Nigel Rodley, Badria Al-Awadhi, Philippe Kirsch, and Mahnoush H. Arsanjani. *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*. Report. N.p.: Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, 2011.
- BBC. "Bangladeshis Complain of Bahrain Rally 'Coercion.'" March 17, 2011. Accessed March 23, 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-12773696>.
- Busafwan, Abbas. *The Structure of Tyranny in Bahrain: A Study of the Balance of Power within the Ruling Family*. London: Bahrain Centre for Studies in London, 2012. Accessed December 1, 2013. <http://www.bcsf.org.uk/en/publications/bahrain-structure-tyranny-power/1547-bahrain-structure-tyranny-power>.
- Chayes, Sarah. "Bahrain's Shifting Sands." *Sada*, February 13, 2013. Accessed March 26, 2014. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/02/13/bahrain-s-shifting-sands/fg62>.
- Chelkowski, Peter J., and Hamid Dabashi. *Staging a Revolution: The Art of Persuasion in the Islamic Republic of Iran*. London: Booth-Clibborn Editions, 2000.
- Citizens for Bahrain. Letter to the editor. *Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain), December 16, 2013. Accessed March 3, 2014. <http://gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=366907>.
- Committee to Protect Journalists. "2011 CPJ International Press Freedom Awardee." News release. 2013. Accessed November 25, 2013. <http://www.cpj.org/awards/2011/mansoor-al-jamri-bahrain.php>.
- Cooke, Miriam. *Tribal Modern: Branding New Nations in the Arab Gulf*. Davis, CA: University of California Press, 2014.
- Daily Tribune* (Manama, Bahrain). "Citizens Join Against Terror." February 23, 2014. Accessed March 1, 2014. <http://dt.bh/citizens-join-against-terror/>.
- Delmar-Morgan, Alex, and Tom Wright. "Bahrain's Foreign Police Add to Tensions." *Wall Street Journal* (New York), March 25, 2011. Accessed November 23, 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703784004576220762563363574.html>.
- Dickinson, Elizabeth. "All Talk." *Foreign Policy*, October 31, 2013. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/10/31/all_talk_bahrain.
- Dixit, Priya. "State/terrorism: Discourses of Terrorism and State Identity-Formation." PhD diss., American University, 2009. Accessed February 16, 2014.

<http://ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/304825585?accountid=7118>.

Dresch, Paul. "Foreign Matter: The Place of Strangers in Gulf Society." 2006. In *Globalization and the Gulf*, edited by John W. Fox, Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, and Mohammed Al Murtawa, 200-23. London: Routledge, 2006.

Facebook. Accessed November 23, 2013.

<https://www.facebook.com/search/178269738890732/likers/pages-liked>.

Facebook. Accessed November 23, 2013. <https://www.facebook.com/Coalition14th>.

Facebook update. February 14, 2012, 5:12 p.m.

https://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=182815961758737https://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=182815961758737.

February 14 Youth Coalition. "The Coalition's 'Ashura Message to the Mujahideen of Our Revolution.'" News release. November 16, 2012. Accessed October 21, 2013. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/%D8%A5%D8%A6%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-14-%D9%81%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%B1/february-14-youth-coalition-final-warning-to-the-mercenaries-hired-by-al-khalifa/314961681888203>.

———. "February 14 Youth Coalition Final Warning to the Mercenaries Hired by Al-Khalifa Regime." News release. January 27, 2012. Accessed March 23, 2014. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/%D8%A5%D8%A6%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-14-%D9%81%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%B1/february-14-youth-coalition-final-warning-to-the-mercenaries-hired-by-al-khalifa/314961681888203>.

———. *February 14 Youth Coalition Logo*. Image. Facebook. April 4, 2011. Accessed November 30, 2013. https://scontent-a-dfw.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-ash2/200744_178269905557382_4186537_n.jpg.

———. *Nation without Human Rights*. Image. Facebook. November 30, 2012. Accessed October 29, 2013. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=477744715609898&set=a.370417419675962.111943.178269738890732&type=1>.

———. *Oh the Masses Are Proficient in Revolution*. Image. Facebook. December 21, 2011. Accessed October 29, 2013. <https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/OkWscGD3blUc9wmQwemkEABgoXGFob60>

- EvhiJAwlyS4gngSWcJRgECB3_vjSkd0Pg6zojc-kxkpg9cDVr_4cnPSkt9wjPzUjPm-_MXa-vN5FZMXhapIbg8J8.
- . "Our Enemy the Khalifa Takes Revenge at Home after Failing Abroad. # Bahrain." News release. September 23, 2013. Accessed October 21, 2013. <http://http:www.facebook.com/notes>.
- . "Pearl Charter." News release. October 22, 2011. Accessed October 8, 2013. <https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fnotes%2F14feb-bahrain>.
- . "Press Release Number 1." News release. April 18, 2011. Accessed October 21, 2013. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/%D8%A5%D8%A6%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9-14-%D9%81%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%B1/%D8%A8%D9%80%D9%80%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%BA-%D8%B5%D9%80%D8%AD%D9%80%D9%81%D9%80%D9%8A-%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%80%D9%80%D9%85-1-/181603261890713>.
- . *Revolution of Minarets*. Image. Facebook. October 27, 2013. Accessed March 4, 2014. https://www.facebook.com/Coalition14th?hc_location=timeline.
- . "Statement of Supporters the February 14 Revolution: No to the Manama Charter and Humiliation ... Yes to the Charter of the Opposition and the Youth of the Revolution to Overthrow Hamad and Al Khalifa Government." News release. October 13, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/14feb-bahrain>.
- . *Who are the Terrorists?* Photograph. Facebook. Accessed March 25, 2014. <http://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/image06.jpg?w=300&h=300>.
- "For the Sake of our Opposition." Youtube. Video file, 2:21. Posted by 'Isa al-Qasem, January 20, 2012. Accessed February 22, 2014. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1loi6Dt0WSo&feature=plcp&context=C348df66UDOEgsToPDskIY9qqumStBcLYQTvkDd4eA>.
- Fox, John W., Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, and Mohammed Al Murtawa. "The Arab Gulf Region: Traditionalism Globalized or Globalization Traditionalized." 2006. In *Globalization and the Gulf*. London: Routledge, 2006.

- Fuccaro, Nelida. *Histories of City of State in the Persian Gulf: Manama since 1800*. Cambridge University Press, 2009. EPUB.
- Fuller, Thomas. "Bahrain opposition leader returns from exile." *New York Times* (NY), February 26, 2011. Accessed November 23, 2013.
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/27/world/middleeast/27bahrain.html?_r=0.
- Gardener, Andrew. *City of Strangers: Gulf Migration and the Indian Community in Bahrain*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010.
- Gengler, Justin. "Are Bahrain's Sunnis Still Awake?" *Sada*, June 25, 2012. Accessed October 3, 2013. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/06/25/are-bahrain-s-sunnis-still-awake/caoa>.
- . "Bahrain's Sunni Awakening." *Middle East Report*, January 17, 2012. Accessed October 15, 2013. <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero011712>.
- . "Crown Prince Salman Appointed Managing First Deputy Prime Minister for Important and Serious Affairs." *Religion and Politics in Bahrain* (blog). Entry posted March 12, 2013. Accessed November 23, 2013.
<http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2013/03/crown-prince-salman-appointed-managing.html>.
- . "Ethnic Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf." PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2011.
- . "Fighting Dialogue with More Dialogue." *Religion and Politics in Bahrain* (blog). Entry posted June 17, 2011. Accessed December 7, 2013.
<http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/search?q=fighting+dialogue+with+dialogue>.
- . "Look Who's Boycotting Dialogue Now." *Religion and Politics in Bahrain* (blog). Entry posted March 25, 2012. Accessed November 25, 2013.
<http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2012/03/look-whos-boycotting-dialogue-now.html>.
- . "Obama- Iran: A Love Story, Chapter 2." *Religion and Politics in Bahrain* (blog). Entry posted July 8, 2011. Accessed November 29, 2013.
<http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2011/07/obama-iran-love-story-chapter-2.html>.

- . "Royal Factionalism, the Khawalid, and the Securitization of 'the Shi'a Problem' in Bahrain." *Journal of Arabian Studies: Arabia, the Gulf, and the Red Sea* 3, no. 1 (June 27, 2013): 53-79. Accessed October 15, 2013. doi:10.1080/21534764.2013.802944.
- Go to Iran*. Image. Bahrain Religion and Politics. August 28, 2013. Accessed March 27, 2014. <http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2013/08/the-big-picture-in-bahrain.html>.
- Government of Bahrain. "About the National Dialogue." News release. Accessed November 25, 2013. <http://www.nd.bh/en/index.php/the-dialogue/the-dialogue2011/about>.
- . "Justice Minister: Resumption of the National Dialogue is an Assertion of the Open-Door Policy." Bahrain National Dialogue. Last modified February 4, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://www.nd.bh/en/index.php>.
- . "National Dialogue Participants - First Session." News release. February 10, 2013. Accessed November 25, 2013. <http://www.nd.bh/en/index.php/dialogue/participants/first-round/sessions1-10/session1>.
- Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain). "Condemned!" July 18, 2013. Accessed March 23, 2014. <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/ArchiveDefault.aspx?date=07/18/2013>.
- Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain). "Fires Kill 26 Bangladeshis in Two Years." March 1, 2014. Accessed March 1, 2014. <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=371632>.
- Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain). "GCC Union 'Crucial for Security.'" December 24, 2013.
- Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain). "Rioters Go on the Rampage in Sitra." March 31, 2013. Accessed April 27, 2013. <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=350512>.
- "Gulf Union is a GCC Key Goal since its Inception, Says Bahrain Ambassador to KSA." *Bahrain News Agency*, December 26, 2013. Accessed March 4, 2014. <http://bna.bh/portal/en/news/595017>.
- Hammond, Andrew. "Bahrain says group follows violent Shi'ite cleric." *Reuters*, June 4, 2012. Accessed November 23, 2013.

- <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/04/us-bahrain-party-cleric-idUSBRE8530QC20120604>.
- Helem Chapin Metz, ed. *Persian Gulf States: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1993. Accessed 23 November 2012.
countrystudies.us/persian-gulf-states/
- House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, comp. *UK's Relations with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain*. London, U.K.: n.p., 2012. Accessed October 15, 2013.
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmfaaff/writev/bahrain/bahrain.pdf>.
- Huffman, Tyler. "Gulf countries take steps to achieve monetary unity." *Al-Monitor*, December 29, 2014. Accessed March 3, 2014. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2013/12/gulf-gcc-monetary-union-central-bank.html>.
- Human Rights Watch. *For a Better Life*. Publication. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2012. Accessed November 23, 2012.
<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2012/10/01/better-life-2>.
- International Crisis Group. *Popular Protest in the Middle East and North Africa: Bahrain's Rocky Road to Reform*. Washington D.C.: International Crisis Group, 2011.
- Jones, Marc Owen. "Fallen Fruit, Foreign Plots and Road Rage: Today in Bahrain." *Marc Owen Jones* (blog). Entry posted February 13, 2013. Accessed March 19, 2014.
<http://marcowenjones.wordpress.com/?s=fruit>.
- . "Police Assist in Vandalising and Looting a Supermarket in Bahrain." *Marc Owen Jones* (blog). Entry posted April 13, 2012. Accessed March 23, 2014.
<http://marcowenjones.wordpress.com/2012/04/13/police-assist-in-the-looting-of-a-supermarket-in-bahrain/>.
- . "Systemic Police Deviance and Police Reform in Bahrain." Paper presented at Policing Protests in the Middle East Workshop, University of Durham, Durham, UK, April 26, 2012. Accessed March 1, 2014.
<http://marcowenjones.wordpress.com/2012/04/28/systemic-police-deviance-police-reform-in-bahrain-work-in-progress/>.
- Jones, Toby C., and Ala'a Shehabi. "Bahrain's Revolutionaries." *Foreign Policy*, January 2, 2012. Accessed November 23, 2013.
http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/01/02/bahrains_revolutionaries.

- Jowdar, Salah. "The Charter is the Foundation." Editorial. *Al-Ayam* (Bahrain), February 14, 2013. Accessed November 29, 2013. <http://www.alayam.com/writers/7030>.
- . "For Foreigners at Least." Editorial. *Al-Ayam* (Bahrain), October 3, 2012. Accessed March 1, 2014. <http://www.alayam.com/writers/5330>.
- Juma', Mohammed Mubarak. "What Islamic Revolution Are We Talking About?" *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain), February 11, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12743/article/7173.html>.
- Kamel Al-Deen, Hala. "The Dialogue of Truth." Editorial. *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain), February 10, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12742/article/7038.html>.
- Kapiszewski, Andrzej. *Nationals and Expatriates: Population and Labour Dilemmas of the Gulf Cooperation Council States*. Reading, English: Ithaca Press, 2001.
- Karranah News - 14 Feb. Facebook update. April 22, 2011. <https://www.facebook.com/KarranahNews?ref=stream>.
- Khalifa, Abdullah. "Iranian Fascism and Its Results." Editorial. *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain), February 19, 2013. Accessed March 11, 2013. <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12751/article/8693.html>.
- Khalifa, Reem. "Bahrain's Dialogue...Dialogue Waiting for Openness." Editorial. *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 10, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3809/news/read/737863/1.html>.
- Khuri, Fuad I. *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Louër, Laurence. "Bahrain's National Dialogue and the Ever-Deepening Sectarian Divide." *Sada*, June 29, 2011. Accessed November 23, 2013. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/06/29/bahrain-s-national-dialogue-and-ever-deepening-sectarian-divide/gbow>.
- . "Houses Divided: The Splintering of Bahrain's Political Camps." *Sada*, April 12, 2012. Accessed October 3, 2013. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/04/04/houses-divided-splintering-of-bahrain-s-political-camps/a6ej>.

———. *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Lynch, Marc. "The Entrepreneurs of Cynical Sectarianism: Why the Middle East's Identity Conflicts Go Way beyond the Sunni-Shiite Divide." *Foreign Policy*, November 13, 2013. Accessed March 21, 2014.
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/11/12/the_entrepreneurs_of_cynical_sectarianism.

———. "What's Happening in Bahrain (I Mean, the 14th Province of Iran)?" *Foreign Policy*, February 19, 2009. Accessed November 29, 2013.
http://lynch.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/02/19/whats_happening_in_bahrain_i_mean_the_14th_province_of_iran.

Madhub, Hassan. The Friendliness of Bahrain. Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society. Last modified October 8, 2012. Accessed November 23, 2012.
<http://www.alwefaq.org/index.php?show=news&action=article&id=4969>.

———. "Dialogue." Editorial. *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 14, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013.
<http://www.alwasatnews.com/3813/news/read/738998/1.html>.

Maki, Yusuf. "Gulf Union: Guarantee for the Future." *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), December 20, 2013. Accessed March 4, 2014.
<http://www.alwasatnews.com/4122/news/read/839635/1.html>.

Manama Voice. "Bahraini Street Making Fun of Sentence Passed on an Asian Over 3 Pieces of Fruit in Kunar." *Manama Voice*, February 2, 2014. Accessed March 1, 2014.
http://www.manamavoice.com/index.php?plugin=news&act=news_read&id=12012.

Manama Voice (Manama, Bahrain). "The February 14 Revolution Coalition: A Brief Biography." February 1, 2012. Accessed October 21, 2013.
http://manamavoice.com/news-news_read-7292-0.html.

Matthiesen, Toby. *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring That Wasn't*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2013.

McCoy, Eric. "Iranians in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates: Migration, Minorities, and Identities in the Persian Gulf Arab States." Master's thesis, University of Arizona, 2008. Accessed November 24, 2013.

- <http://media.proquest.com/media/pq/classic/doc/1650502621/fmt/ai/rep/NPDF?hl=&cit%3Aaut>.
- Mohammed, Abu. Letter to the editor. *Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain), October 18, 2012. Accessed November 24, 2012. <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=334647>.
- Muharraqi. "Untitled." Cartoon. *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Bahrain), June 22, 2011. Accessed December 5, 2013. <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/cartoon.php?img=source/12143/images/mcartoon.jpg>.
- Nader, Sami. "What Next for Qatar and the GCC?" *Al Monitor*, March 9, 2014. Accessed March 25, 2014. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/03/qatar-gcc-ambassador-withdrawal-reassess-role.html>.
- Nasr, Seyyed Vali Reza. *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future*. New York: Norton, 2006.
- The National* (Dubai, UAE). "Stick Together for Security, Saudi Arabia Warns GCC." December 9, 2013. Accessed March 3, 2014. <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/stick-together-for-security-saudi-arabia-warns-gcc>.
- National Gathering of Unity. "Al-Arabi: We Refuse the Term "Naturalized" and the Electoral Districts Are Fair." News release. July 13, 2011. Accessed October 15, 2013. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-the-gathering-of-national-unity/al-arabi-we-refuse-the-term-naturalized-and-the-electoral-districts-are-fair/180068045389474>.
- . "The Story of the National Gathering of Unity." *Altajama3*. Accessed October 15, 2013. <http://altajam3.org/portal/arabic/%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%B0%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%91%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9>.
- Obaid, Nawaf. "Saudi Arabia's Gulf Union Project Includes Military Dimension." *Al Monitor*, December 29, 2013. Accessed March 4, 2014. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/12/saudi-arabia-military-gulf-union-regional-leadership.html>.

Patrick, Neil. "Nationalism in the Gulf States." In *The Transformation of the Gulf: Politics, Economics and the Global Order*, edited by David Held and Kristian Ulrichsen, 47-65. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012.

Picture of the Crown Prince at the al-Aali Family Majlis, Sitting near the Terrorist Khalil al-Marzuq. Photograph. Bawaba al-Bahrain. July 18, 2013. Accessed November 24, 2013. <http://b4bh.com/b/newspaper-view-4999.html>.

"Political Naturalization in Bahrain." Bahrain Center for Human Rights. WMV video, 8:25. Posted by Bahrain Center for Human Rights, June 2002. Accessed November 23, 2012. <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/467>.

"Pro-Democracy Detained University and Schools Students, Are Prevented from Taking Their Exams." News release. <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/03/31/18640/>.

Qasim, Isa. "Fatwa by Ayatollah Qassim: Terrorism is Forbidden in Islam." News release. January 10, 2014. Accessed February 17, 2014. <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2014/01/11/25635/>.

———. "Why Do the Moderates Become Fewer?" News release. August 25, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://alwefaq.net/cms/2013/08/25/22292/>.

Rashid, Fawzia. "Snuggling up to the US, Iran and Russia at the Same Time." *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain), February 12, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12744/article/7182.htm>.

———. "Twisted Logic: Begging for Foreign Intervention and Talking about Saudi Intervention." Editorial. *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain). Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12743/article/7053.html>.

Reuters. "Bahrain's King Gves out Cash Ahead of Protests." *Reuters*, February 11, 2011. Accessed November 28, 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/11/bahrain-subsidies-idAFLDE71A24Z20110211>.

"Revolutionaries' Fist Statement Preparing for Violence in Bahrain." Youtube. Video file, 2:12. Posted by BahrainPulse, January 24, 2012. Accessed February 22, 2014. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FbQIoubPTk>.

- S, Jose. Letter to the editor. *Gulf Daily News* (Manama, Bahrain), October 24, 2012. Accessed November 24, 2012. <http://gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=340186>.
- Saraya al-Ashtar. Facebook update. July 17, 2013. <https://www.facebook.com/pages/????? ??????>.
- . Saraya al-Ashtar's Logo. Image. Facebook. May 3, 2013. Accessed February 17, 2014. https://scontent-a-lax.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-ash3/t1/941413_504713256249487_948630485_n.jpg.
- Sayad, Hamed 'Azat. "Reconciliation Dialogue." *Akhbar al-Khalij* (Manama, Bahrain), February 15, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013. <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12747/article/8164.html>.
- Sayar, 'Isa. "A Citizen's Letter to His Representative in the Dialogue." Editorial. *Al-Wasat* (Manama, Bahrain), February 12, 2013. <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3811/news/read/738498/1.html>.
- "Sitra Rebels attack Mercenaries with Extinguisher Weapons." Youtube. Video file, 0:59. Posted by AHRARMURQOBAN, January 9, 2012. Accessed February 22, 2014. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WezJ8haENtM>.
- Smyth, Philip. "Hezbollah's Fallen Soldiers." *Foreign Policy*, May 22, 2013. Accessed February 16, 2014. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/22/hezbollahs_fallen_soldiers?wp_login_redirect=0.
- Toumi, Habib. "Lower Chamber Accepts Resignation of 11 al-Wefaq MPs." *Gulf News* (Dubai, UAE), March 29, 2011. Accessed November 23, 2013. <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/lower-chamber-accepts-resignation-of-11-al-wefaq-mps-1.784522>.
- Trade Arabia* (Manama, Bahrain). "Fast Track GCC Union, Say Imams." May 12, 2012. Accessed March 4, 2014. http://www.tradearabia.com/news/LAW_217680.html.
- Twitter. Last modified January 24, 2012. <https://twitter.com/BahrainFist>.
- UAE Identity Authority. "The Question of Identity in GCC Countries." Paper presented at The 21st-Century Gulf: The Challenge of Identity, University Of Exeter, Exeter, UK, June 30, 2010. Accessed March 23, 2014.

- <http://www.slideshare.net/alkhouri/the-question-of-identity-in-gcc-countries-17227264>.
- Ulrichsen, Kristian Coates. "Bahrain's Uprising: Regional Dimensions and International Consequences." *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2, no. 1 (May 29, 2013). Accessed November 23, 2013.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.be>.
- Voice of Bahrain*. "Naturalization of Media Mercenaries in Bahrain." Editorial. September 20, 2012. Accessed March 26, 2014.
<http://www.vob.org/ar/index.php?show=news&action=article&id=3759>.
- Washington Times*. "Top Sunni: P.M. Should Mull Quitting after Crisis." August 18, 2011.
- "Why Eker Is Angry." Youtube. Video file, 1:41. Posted by Aleker News., January 21, 2012. Accessed February 22, 2014.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eI5hV3WYtIc>.
- Wright, Steven. *Fixing the Kingdom: Political Evolution and Socio-Economic Challenges in Bahrain*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 2010. Accessed October 21, 2013.
<http://www12.georgetown.edu/sfs/qatar/cirs/SteveWrightCIRSOccasionalPaper2010.pdf>.
- Zayani, Hisham. "New Opportunity or New Crisis?" Editorial. *Al-Watan* (Manama, Bahrain), February 11, 2013. Accessed October 20, 2013.
<http://www.alwatannews.net>.